THE BOY JESUS AND HIS COMPANIONS

CONG'L. CHURCH

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THE BOY JESUS AND HIS COMPANIONS

For 4-6 Year Olds

A Child's Garden of Verse
Little Jack Rabbit
A Visit from St. Nicholas
Dame Wiggins of Lee and Her Seven Wonderful Cats
Sing-Song and Other Poems by Christina Rossetti
The Little Wooden Doll
A Baby's Life of Jesus Christ
Charlie and His Kitten Topsy

For 6-8 Year Olds

Robin Redbreast
Two Mice and a King
Sally Gabble and the Fairies
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
Thumbelina
The Cat and the Captain
Charlie and His Friends
The Little Children's Bible
The Light Princess
The King of the Golden River
Silver Pennies
A Dog of Flanders
The Pope's Mule
Memoirs of a Donkey
The Peep-Show Man
The Peter Pan Picture Book
Memoirs of a London Doll
The Little Lame Prince
The Adventures of a Brownie
Goody Two Shoes
The Magic Forest
Susanna's Auction

For 8-10 Year Olds

The Story of the Pilgrims
The Boy Jesus and His Companions
The Goose Girl
The Tiger's Mistake
Little Dog Toby
The Nurenberg Stove
The Good-Natured Bear
The Merry Pilgrimage
The Sons of Kai
The Rose and the Ring
King Penguin—A Legend of the South Seas

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
NORFOLK AVE. AND NINTH ST.
NORFORK, NEBRASKA

James and John

THE BOY JESUS AND HIS COMPANIONS

BY RUFUS M JONES
ILLUSTRATED BY KÁLMÁN KUBÍNYI

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1930

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
NORFOLK AVE. AND NINTH ST.
NORFORK, NEBRASKA

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FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

SOME years ago when the Shah of Persia was visiting Queen Victoria, the Queen said to him, "I cannot understand how you can be worshipers of the sun in your country." The Shah, who had been struggling for some days with the fogs of London, replied, "But, most excellent Queen, you have never really seen him! You should see him once as he looks in the clear, pure air of Persia. Then you would worship him as we do." The same thing is true of Jesus. Few people really *see* him. The mists and fogs of the long, intervening years have hidden him from us. When John the Baptist saw him coming over the hills to the Jordan he cried, "Behold!" which means, "Just see!" That is what we need to do now. We need to see

him, to look at him with real vision. When Holman Hunt decided to paint Jesus working in the carpenter shop of Nazareth his friends tried to persuade him not to do it. They said to him, "You can paint only what you can see, and you cannot see Jesus. He is no longer here to be seen." "But I am going to see him," replied the great painter. "I am going to live in the Gospels until I find him. I am going to Palestine and walk the roads where he walked, climb the hills which he climbed, work with the peasants as he worked, until I see him. And then I will paint him as he really was."

These stories of mine which follow have been written to help young people to see him as he grew up in his home town, as he walked and talked, as he worked and healed and preached,—see him and his little group of friends. If any boy or girl to-day really sees him, and is awakened with the appeal of interest that is sure to come as soon as he is

truly seen, it will then be perfectly easy to love him and to follow him—easy because it will be the most natural thing in the world. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." The first step in religion, as in art, is to *see,* to *behold.*

I have taken some liberties, of course, with the characters in these stories. No one can write about the life of the Holy Family which the great painters pictured, or about the early years of the Saints and the Apostles without drawing upon imagination. But I have made my pictures to fit the facts which we know. The geography and historical background of my pictures are, I believe, true to fact. The Gospels themselves have supplied the lines and much of the filling for the sketches of character. I have reproduced what I *saw* and I have written all these stories of holy men and women in a spirit of love and reverence. Here, as always, when I am writing for children and

young people, I try to imagine first what my dear boy would love to read if he were here now as he was when he left me at ten to go where he *sees* in full reality what those of us who remain behind can only wonder about and dream of.

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CHAPTER I

THE GREAT HOPE

I SUPPOSE that every boy and every girl, too, has a great hope. It is a thrilling adventure to be young and to have your life, with all its chances and expectations still in front of you. But some boys and some girls have more expectations and greater hopes than others do. They live, perhaps, at a time when great events are occurring or when everybody is looking for the dawn of a better era, and so the young people of such a time are inspired with unusual hopes and stand tiptoe, waiting for the hour of the new day to come.

You see, boys and girls know a good deal more about things than most people realize or suspect. They do something more than just sleep and play. They *think;* they imagine; they plan; they build worlds; they dream of things that haven't happened yet, but are going to happen some time. That boy, whom you all know, who goes around with his pea shooter, and who worries his teacher, and sometimes his dear mother, has more going on inside his head than grown-up people ever guess when they see him at his play or hear him whistling his careless tunes. He has *his* great hopes, too, and some day he may help build the new and better world.

Now I am going to tell you about a boy who lived a very long time ago when things were not at all the same as they are to-day, and I want you to know what he thought about when nobody suspected that he was thinking about anything. His name was

Simeon. He was a country boy and his home was not very far from the shores of the Jordan River, which was in plain sight from the hilltops where he went with his father's sheep. He had a dog named "Caleb," that chased everything except the sheep; toward them he was as gentle and tender as though they were his own brothers and sisters.

Simeon was having a bad day. Nobody understood him. Whatever he did was wrong. He had got up too late to have breakfast with the family and he found that his brothers had already gone on a wonderful excursion and that he had missed it by being late. He annoyed his sisters, who had to give up other things and get him a breakfast after all the food had been put away. He went to fetch a jar of water from the spring for his mother and fell and broke the jar. Now his father had sent him up on the hill to count the sheep just when he had

planned to see if he couldn't catch some of the fish he had noticed the night before in the little brook near the house. Everything in the world outside was perfect that morning,—the sky a glorious blue, the air pure as that above the snow peak of Hermon, the river below flashing like many-colored glass windows in the early morning sunlight. But inside, in Simeon's spirit, everything was dull and dreary. A heavy fog had settled down upon the horizon of his usually happy soul.

No sooner had he reached the top of the hill, where he was beginning to count the scattered sheep, than he saw the strangest sight his young eyes had ever seen. A large number of men in bright uniforms on black horses had crossed the river Jordan and were winding up the valley by the road that climbed the hills not far from where Simeon was standing. He forgot all about counting the sheep; he forgot to watch "Caleb," who was busy trying to dig out of his hole a funny

Simeon

little animal that lived in the hillside. At the head of the procession marched a giant soldier carrying the famous eagle standard of the Roman army. Just behind him on the largest horse Simeon had ever seen rode a kingly looking man with a helmet on his head. The horse was covered with bright trappings and the sun flashed from the helmet of the man who rode on majestically as though he could conquer any city in the world and place his eagle standard in any capital. A long train of soldiers followed behind the hero and the whole valley was full of movement and excitement. A very great event in history was happening there before Simeon's eyes, though he did not yet know what it was.

That man on horseback, the man with the shining helmet, was Pompey the Great—Cneius Pompeius Magnus, and he was on his way to conquer Jerusalem. It was the year 63 Before Christ. Pompey had taken Damas-

cus, after having conquered many other famous cities farther east, and while he was in Damascus one of the political parties in Judea had asked him to come and help put down the other rival party in Jerusalem. Pompey didn't care any more about one party than about another. He was simply glad to have an excuse to take Jerusalem on Mount Zion and add it, with all Judea, to the provinces which belonged to Rome. Here he was now riding straight on toward the wonderful hill city, and Simeon watched him as he wound up the curving road on his way from the Jordan valley toward the city where the temple of his people stood. Simeon ran with all the speed of a healthy boy to tell his father and mother that something most unusual was happening over beyond the hills where the quiet sheep were feeding.

His father knew a little bit about the great event, for he had been in Jerusalem when the

plan was made. He told his boy about the famous Roman general, and he promised to go at once to the city to get the latest news. Many days passed by before any news came either of Simeon's father or of Pompey. When they did hear, it was sad news that reached them. Pompey had besieged Jerusalem. The walls of the temple had been battered with great stones slung from Roman engines. Large numbers of people had been killed. A battle had been fought on the Sabbath Day when many of the faithful Jews refused to fight and the Romans had cut their way into the temple. Pompey himself had gone into the holy place where only the high priest had ever been before. The city had fallen. The temple was defiled. Rome had conquered Jerusalem and was in possession of Simeon's country. This man whom he saw riding through the Jordan valley had conquered Judea and made it a Roman province.

When Simeon's father came back, all pale and thin and haggard from the siege, and told them what he had seen and heard they gave a loud cry of sorrow, and little Simeon went out with his dog to the sheepfold and wept as though his heart would break. How could he bear the terrible disaster! Whenever he had seen the temple his heart had thrilled with pride. Whenever he had visited Jerusalem he had felt his whole being uplifted with the joy that he shared with his people in the glory of the city. Now the glory was gone, the temple was wrecked and the city belonged to Rome, the worshiper of idols. He looked at his peaceful dog and wished that he, too, were made like "Caleb," so that he need not feel the sorrows of the world.

My readers will begin to wonder why this chapter is called "The Great Hope." It seems to be about a great defeat and a great sorrow. Yes, it was defeat and sorrow first

and then out of the defeat and sorrow there grew in Simeon's heart—little by little—a great hope. He learned to read in the Synagogue School near his home and he began to discover that there were stories and promises in the rolls of the Old Testament more interesting than anything which he found in the fields where the sheep were. He found something that seemed to him more beautiful than the flowers or the birds or even the stars. As he read the Prophets and the Psalms he learned that there was a great hope to be expected for Israel. He found words that made him thrill the way he used to when he went to Jerusalem with his father and saw the splendor of the holy temple. He read and pondered. He studied and meditated. As he grew older and wiser he felt sure that even though Pompey had triumphed for a little while, a great future was soon to come for Jerusalem and for his people.

The reason he thought so was that he had

learned through the rolls of his Book to believe in God. When he was a little child he believed in Him, but not the same way. Now he believed that God was a great living Power and that He meant to remake the world somewhat the way He remade it every year in the spring after the winter was over. But this time He would not only remake the flowers and the leaves and the grass after the ruin of winter, but He would remake the cities and the people and change everything into order and beauty and goodness so that there would be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor evil. And he believed that God was going to send a Messiah King to change the world and make all things new. This came to be Simeon's great hope.

Days came and went. Years rolled by. The little boy who had seen Pompey ride toward Jerusalem became a man and still the hope grew. Fifty years went by. Ten more years passed. Three more years came.

Simeon was an old man now, but his hope remained, as bright as in his youth, when he first learned to believe that God would remake everything. He lived in Jerusalem now and no longer on the hills above the Jordan valley. The temple had been rebuilt by King Herod and was more beautiful now than when Pompey's soldiers had battered its walls, and broken into its holy place. In a quiet room of the temple, apart from the throngs of people, Simeon, old and feeble, but full of hope and expectations, spent much of his time praying, and thinking of the new time soon coming when God would remake all things. Everybody knew that he was a good man and all little children loved him for the peace that was on his fine old face and for the beautiful smile which always greeted them when they spoke to him. In his heart he had heard God say, in quiet words which he understood, that before the time should come for him to die he would

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see the coming of the One who was to remake the world and be the dawn of the new day.

One day as he turned to smile at a little child in his mother's arms he gave a sudden cry of joy, because he felt sure, as soon as he looked into the face of this little child and into the face of the mother, that here at last was the One for whom he had waited ever since he was a little boy, in the day when he had lost his country but had found a great hope. He took the little child in his arms and with a beautiful light shining upon his old, wrinkled face, said, "Now I am ready to die, to go to my rest with joy and happiness, for I have seen with my own eyes the One who has come to bring salvation to His people, and I have seen the dawn of the new light for all the world."

CHAPTER II

GREAT ONES AMONG THE LOWLY

ONCE it was supposed that heroes were to be found only among people of noble birth or from royal descent. Maidens, too, who appeared in stories were either born princesses or they married some famous prince and then lived happily ever after in a royal palace. We know now that many of the finest heroes the world has ever seen have been born in poor little cottages where they had no splendor at all, and that some of the loveliest and purest maidens that have ever lived had no distinguished ancestors and married, not princes, but poor, hard-working husbands, or perhaps became lovely unmar-

ried aunts, and with no badges of royalty except their nobility of spirit and their bravery of soul.

I am going to tell you about one of these beautiful village maidens, who was worthy to be the bride of the loftiest prince, and queen of the most splendid country, but who really married a poor village carpenter and worked day after day by his side instead of sitting on a gorgeous throne. Her name was Mary. She lived in a picturesque little town named Nazareth, nestled in a great circle of lofty hills, while not far away toward the east rose the mountain which she always loved to see—Mount Tabor. Away toward the south of the little town stretched a wonderful plain called the Great Plain of Esdraelon, where many world battles had been fought or were to be fought later. Off toward the northeast, but too far away for Mary to see it, was one of the most beautiful lakes in the world—the Lake of Gennesa-

ret, which was also called the Sea of Galilee. Nazareth was on a great highroad which came from Acco on the Mediterranean Sea and after leaving Nazareth in the eastward direction wound around the shoulder of Mount Tabor to Gennesaret and then on to the famous city of Damascus with its two rivers. A stream of commerce thus passed through the lovely hill town of Nazareth and kept it from being a stagnant village.

But it was not the long files of camels loaded with silks and spices that interested Mary most. There was something else about the little village that made it much more dear to her. It was one of the greatest spots in all Galilee, in all Palestine, too, for wild flowers, and Mary had from her earliest childhood, loved flowers with a very deep love. The first ones she had ever seen were the lilies of the field. She was so moved and impressed when she saw them that she put

her little hands together and looked up as though she were saying a prayer of thanksgiving to her heavenly Father, who made the lilies. She had not learned to talk yet and the first word she learned to say was the word in her language for lily. Then came the no less lovely cyclamens which thrilled her almost as much as the lilies of the field had done. And before long she knew the names of a hundred flowers. When her mother wanted to promise her something that would move her very much she would say, "If Mary is a good girl all the morning we will go out in the fields, or we will climb the hillside, to pick flowers this afternoon." She was at once a little saint! When she was ill, as she often was, she would lie on her little rug in the corner with a flower in her hand, quiet and uncomplaining. She always found the first flower when spring came, and she knew exactly where each kind of flower could be expected to show its face.

There was something very mysterious about this flower love of hers. It just burst forth when she saw her first flower and never left her—in fact it grew stronger as she grew older. She would sit for hours at a time in the fields, when she was ten years old, gazing at the old flowers she knew and hunting for new ones, her face all lighted up with a perfect joy. Her love for the flowers which were so pure and lovely tended all the time to make her more pure and lovely herself, for one always grows to be like the thing one loves most.

Another thing marked this hill town maiden and that was her love for little children. She had no dolls. Girls in Galilee in those days did not have dolls. It was too bad, but they had to get on without them. One good thing about it was that never having had any, or having seen any, they never thought of them and did not know what they were missing! But Mary found something

even better than dolls to interest her. She was always taking care of little children who were *alive*. Little girls to-day think it wonderful when they get a doll with eyes that open and shut and that cries like a real child. All the little creatures that Mary took care of and played with had eyes that opened and shut and all of them cried vigorously! But they could do something that dolls do not do and cannot do. They laughed, they gurgled, they shouted, they looked very happy and pleased whenever Mary picked them up or played with them. And they could eat "real" things. It was best of all, they thought, to have Mary come into their little cottages when they were ill. She always brought them flowers, of course, but she brought them other things, too—pretty pictures to look at or things they could eat. She told them nice stories. She made the dark, gloomy cottage seem bright and radiant and it seemed to the poor little boys and girls of

Nazareth almost as though an angel had come when Mary entered the low door of their homes.

Mary loved little children for the same reason that she loved flowers. It seemed to her that God had made them and that He loved them. Nobody ever told her so. She just somehow felt it. She always cried when she saw little children all ragged and cold. She couldn't bear to have them go hungry. And it was more than she could endure to see anybody beat a little child or wantonly hurt it. It seemed to her exactly like doing something against God. "I should not think anybody could do *that,*" she would say. She had some sisters and brothers of her own and she never did what so many sisters and brothers do—she never quarreled with them. She would as soon have thought of tramping on flowers with her feet, or of tearing them up and throwing the pieces away! "Of course not," she would say. "Little chil-

dren were made to love, to enjoy, to help; not to fight with and to hit." The result was that everybody loved her and all children ran toward her with shouts of joy wherever she appeared in sight. You will be glad to know that she was very pretty, with beautiful hair and unforgetable eyes, full of light and joy. Poor as she was, she always wore attractive clothes. Everything about her had to be neat and clean, and she always insisted that the colors of what she wore should be in harmony and should fit her hair and eyes. She knew that the flowers always had harmonious colors and she wanted to be as much like them as she could.

There was one more thing about her which you need to know. There was something quite remarkable about her family, and this had made all the difference with Mary. Her mother Anna, her father, her grandfather and grandmother, her uncles and aunts and many of her cousins, belonged to a little

circle of very devoted, religious persons who formed a kind of brotherhood, although they did not call it by that name. They often called themselves "the Quiet Ones in the Land," or "the Meek of the Land," or "God's Poor Friends." They were people who were very poor; people who had been through trouble and suffering. But they had learned to love God, to trust Him and to turn to Him in all their sorrows. They were calm and quiet and patient because they felt that God was near them and with them. They read the beautiful Psalms in the Old Testament and dwelt upon God's promises to the poor and the humble. They did not feel religion to be a burden or a heavy yoke. For the Quiet Ones it was a great joy to pray and to sing and to worship God, because they loved Him. They were the happiest when they turned their thoughts to God. When they thought of the heavenly Father all fear left them. They stopped fretting and worry-

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ing. They let nothing disturb them. They loved to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

They had very few books, but the ones they did have were all full of beautiful stories of how God had taken care of those who trusted in Him and of His promises to lead His people on into better things as soon as they were ready to trust Him, love Him, and obey His will. Everything in Mary's home fitted this spirit of trust and confidence. They kept calm and happy and lived as though they knew that God was their best Friend, so that Mary not only loved flowers and little children, but she also loved God, just as really as she loved lilies and cyclamens and orange blossoms. She felt sure many times that she could hear Him speaking to her, and she had no doubt at all that He took care of her and loved her and wanted her to be true and pure. She had never traveled away from Nazareth. She

had never seen a city. She only dreamed what the temple in Jerusalem looked like, but she had discovered that one did not need to go there, or to climb some high mountain peak, like Tabor, to find God. He was just as near in the quiet, little home in Nazareth as He was anywhere.

As Mary grew older she found some one else to love. It was no prince from Damascus, nor a kinglet from Herod's castle. It was just a plain young carpenter in her own village. She had often seen him when they went to the spring in the evening for water. She had always liked his strong, manly face. She envied the way he could climb steep and difficult cliffs, where rare flowers grew. She admired the skill with which he could make beautiful things with his sharp tools. She had seen the shavings curl out from his plane. She knew that he belonged to the little circle of "the Quiet Ones," that he did not have fear and that he was one of God's

meek, humble men. When her mother told her that Joseph loved her and wanted to marry her, her face shone with a beautiful light, her eyes became deeper and more wonderful than ever, and she quietly said, "I love him too, mother, and we can be very happy together."

Ten of Mary's dearest friends were invited to go with her in the wedding procession, which came in the evening. They all had lighted lamps fastened to the ends of long rods, and as they marched in rhythmic step they swung the lamps, keeping tune with the marriage song which they sang in chorus. It was a joyous time. All kinds of flowers had been gathered for the occasion and the most beautiful spices which the camels brought from Damascus filled the house with rare odors. And thus, with everybody rejoicing all around her, Mary passed from being a carefree maiden to the busy life of the maker of a new home for Joseph, the

carpenter of Nazareth. And as she went about the house with the new and radiant love in her heart she said to herself, "He hath exalted them of low degree."

CHAPTER III

IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA

THE people who lived in Palestine had to pay a great many kinds of taxes. The money they earned by hard labor was not their own to keep or to buy food with. Most of it had to go to the men who gathered the taxes. Wherever Rome conquered a country a great burden of taxes came upon the country. The men who collected the taxes were called Publicans. They were dishonest men and they often tried to get much more from the poor people than they ought to have taken. These taxes had to be paid in Roman money which had Cæsar's image on it, and all Jews hated to pay it because it always

reminded them that they were slaves to Rome.

But there were other taxes and heavier ones than those which had to be paid to Rome. There were King Herod's taxes. He had wars to fight which cost a host of money. Then he was a great builder and his buildings were very costly. He built new palaces, he built fortresses, he built strongholds, he built a gorgeous temple more beautiful than Solomon's, he built new cities, he built amphitheatres and race courses, gardens and parks. Well, all these things had to be paid for by the people and Herod got the money by an enormous system of taxes. He taxed the land; he taxed the houses; he taxed the cow, the donkeys, the goats, the chickens; he taxed everything that had breath and that grew on the land. On top of that, he put a head tax. That is, you had to pay for having a head of your own. On top of that tax he put an income tax and on top of that

he put a "stamp tax." Then you had to pay a tax whenever you carried any food from the country into the city. All these taxes made the laboring people very poor. They had little left to live upon after they had paid their taxes to Rome and to Herod.

You can imagine, then, that Joseph and Mary had very little money. They had plenty of love for each other. They were full of happiness. But when they looked in the little money box where they kept their coins, there was almost nothing in it. Joseph worked very hard through the long days, but there was little left to show for it. The tax man always took his large share of the wages. Mary as a girl in her mother's home had learned to weave and sew, and she worked busily to keep them neatly clothed. Sometimes the tax man came and took her piece of linen after she had finished weaving it and then she could not keep the tears from coming.

One day a news crier came through the little town of Nazareth. He rang a bell and told everybody of a new tax which they would all have to pay. He announced that Cæsar Augustus, Emperor of Rome and of all the world, commanded everybody in Palestine to go to the town, or city, or village where his ancestors had lived, and there to be enrolled and to pay a tax. There were no railroads. There were no automobiles. There were no stagecoaches. There were very few horses. There were almost no good roads. If you took a journey in those days you walked, or you rode in a narrow footpath on a little donkey, unless perhaps you had a camel.

Joseph had one small donkey on whose back he used to carry his boards and beams from the mill to his carpenter shop. Once in a great while he went to Lake Gennesaret on this patient beast, who was no longer young. When Joseph heard the crier shout-

ing his news through the street he knew that he and Mary must take a long journey, all the way to Bethlehem, the city of David, for that was the city of his ancestors and hers. For the next week the poor, thin donkey, who was named "Azaz," got more food to eat than he had ever received before. He little guessed what a journey over hills and hard roads lay before him. When the day came for the journey to begin "Azaz" was brought out with his tiny bridle and with a blanket on his back on which Mary was to sit. There was a little roll of clothes and a small package of food strapped on behind where Mary sat. Joseph of course walked and the food for "Azaz" had to be got along the way as they went. The road at first lay right across the Plain of Esdraelon with beautiful surrounding hills in sight. Then came the Plain of Dothan, which Mary had never crossed before. They found little inns where they

stayed at night, but they soon began to wonder how long their little stock of money would last. Sometimes Joseph got little jobs of work to do at an inn which paid for the night's lodging and for "Azaz's" supper and breakfast. One evening they rode into Samaria, but the people were so unkind to them, just because they were Jews, that they rode on without any supper, traveling forward in the moonlight all through the night. When they came to the city of Shechem they saw the two famous mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, where the Samaritans worshiped Jehovah, and they stopped at Sychar to drink from Jacob's well, and to give "Azaz" some water. They were very glad when they crossed over the border of the country of Samaria, the country of enemies, into the dear land of Judea, which was the country of their fathers and of their own people.

The road wound around great rugged hills. They saw vineyards everywhere and

they found nestling among the hills quiet little villages about which they had often read in their Old Testaments. There was Shiloh and Gilgal and Gibeon and Beeroth and Ramah. Then with thrills in their hearts and sudden cries of joy they saw from a hilltop the dome of the temple and the walls of the holy city. There was Jerusalem which Mary had never seen before—the city of God. She little realized how differently she would feel about that city one day! After seeing Jerusalem, visiting the temple and the famous sites of the ancient city, which King Herod had made more beautiful and splendid than it had ever been before, Joseph and Mary started for the ancestral city of Bethlehem, off to the south of Jerusalem. They had been saving their money so that they could stay in the inn when they arrived at the end of their journey. Joseph had said, "Dear Mary, when we come to David's city thou shalt have rest

and refreshment after this long wearying journey. Thou shalt bathe thy dusty feet and be at ease."

But alas, multitudes of people had gone ahead of them to Bethlehem. The day of the tax had come. Men and women from all over Palestine had come to enroll in the city of their fathers. Every inn was full. Every room was taken. Tired and hungry, they went from inn to inn, and always they got the same answer, "We are full; no room. Try another one." Poor "Azaz" reeled and staggered, he was so tired and hungry, but he bore his load as faithfully as he could. At last one kind innkeeper, gentler than most of such men, said that he had a little cave for animals where he could make a bed for Joseph and Mary, and where tired "Azaz" could sleep with the other animals. And so there on the hay a rug was spread out for the weary travelers and the innkeeper went his way back to the inn and his

many guests. Joseph and Mary had a few figs and dates left, on which they made their frugal supper before they lay down to sleep.

It was a glorious night. The air was still. The stars were shining with a beauty which we in the western lands never quite see. There just above the little stable cave shone one bright star, larger and more lustrous than Joseph thought he had ever seen before. Some time in the night, there among the cows and goats and donkeys, a little child was born to Mary—her first-born son. She had always loved little children. They had seemed to her dearer and sweeter than anything else on earth. But she, even she, never knew until she saw her own baby how wonderful a new-born child really is—your very own. The little, tiny first cry moved her more than her first lily of the field had done, and once more she raised her hands, as she had done then, and said a prayer of thanksgiving to her heavenly Father, and then she

wrapped the tender body in clean white linen which she had spun and woven with her own hands, and she laid him in a little bed of soft hay in the manger, where in the daytime the cows were fed. It seemed almost as though she could hear beautiful singing in the air above her, and words that sounded like "peace" and "good will" swept in upon her ears. In the early morning shepherds came thronging into the little stable, some of them carrying lambs in their arms, and they kneeled down by the manger and acted as though they were adoring the little child who lay there sound asleep, which made Mary wonder.

For some days they stayed in Bethlehem. Joseph enrolled with the tax man and paid the tax for three instead of two. When he returned to the little stable there he saw the most beautiful sight one ever could see. The little child was lying wide-awake in his mother's arms. The light was shining

through the open door upon them both. A wonderful look such as Joseph had never seen before was on Mary's face, as though she had just discovered a new spring of life and love. Mother and child were gazing at each other in a kind of rapture. Joseph stood perfectly still in hushed wonder and could not speak—until Mary looked up at him and smiled as he had never seen her smile before.

After they had finished their allotted time in David's city the three returned to Jerusalem, Joseph walking, while Mary with her child on her bosom rode the little donkey, who had enjoyed every minute they had stayed in the Bethlehem stable. They went directly to the temple and here the little child, who had been named "Jesus" when he was eight days old, was "presented to the Lord," as, according to a very ancient custom, was always done with the first-born son. He was named Jesus because his mother felt

that he was to be a great leader and deliverer, for that is what the name Jesus means. It was here in the temple that dear old Simeon, who had "the great hope," had taken the child in his arms and blessed God. He told Mary that this child was to have a wonderful career of joy and sorrow, for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and, in low and tender tones, he told her that sorrow and pain, like a sharp sword, would pierce her heart one day, but she did not know just what the old man meant. Anna, too, a beautiful white-haired saint, who lived in the temple, gave the little child her blessing and foretold a great mission of service for him, which thrilled Mary and made her wonder in her heart, though she could not speak.

Then came the long return journey back to the little house and carpenter shop which had been empty and still during all the weeks since "Azaz" carried Mary out of the village gate for the momentous journey.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE DAYS OF YOUTH

THOSE days and months in Nazareth when the little child was learning to smile and to talk and to walk were heavenly days for Mary. Each day brought a new joy and a fresh sign of progress. All the mothers in the village came, one after another, to see the babe who had been born in the Bethlehem stable and to compare him with their own little wonder who had been born in Nazareth, which they thought was the proper place to be born in.

It was a pretty sight to see Mary going to the well just outside the village with her water jar on her head, carrying at the same

In the carpenter shop

time in her arms the happy little child, who smiled at everybody that met them. Then there were the walks to the fields and hillsides in spring and summer when the little child had his first sight of the lilies of the field and felt the same joy that had come to his mother when she was a tiny child.

He was almost as happy when he was taken by Joseph to the carpenter shop and was allowed to sit on the workbench and watch the sharp tools do their work. He played with the shavings; he played in the sawdust; he played, too, with such tools as would not cut him, and he drew marks on the boards with Joseph's piece of chalk. He saw strange looking things being made and he wondered what they were for. Then after hours together in the shop the strong man would take the happy little child on his shoulder and go home for the midday meal, where Mary would always be standing

in the door watching them come down the narrow street.

As he grew larger he sometimes played games with other little children in the streets. They used to play "going to a wedding." One child would blow on a little musical pipe for the others to dance the rhythmical wedding march. Then they would change and play "going to a funeral." The little boy with his pipe would sound a musical note and then they would all mourn and weep together as though some one had died. Occasionally, just to make things queer, they would mourn and weep when the piper called for a wedding procession, and they would dance when he asked them to mourn at a funeral. Later, when he was grown up, Jesus used these childish plays in the Nazareth streets as one of his parable stories.

He learned very early how poor and straitened his home was. He saw the dis-

agreeable looking tax man come and take away all the coins from the money box. Sometimes he saw him drive away the goat which gave them their milk. He saw a deep shade of sadness come over his mother's face, and that wonderful light which so often was in her eyes would fade away for a time.

He had seen her once when she had lost a single little coin—the last that was left in the box—spend a very long time searching for it through every part of the house. She lighted a candle, got down on her knees and felt with her hands, but still she could not find it. Everybody hunted; it could not be discovered. At last she got a broom and swept the floor of the little cottage. When the dust and dirt was all swept out into the sunlighted street, there they suddenly found it. It was very small, indeed, but it was all they had, and when she found it Mary went out and called in all her women friends along the street to rejoice with her, because

she had found her coin. That scene Jesus never forgot. He saw by that how little they had, how poor they were, and therefore how precious one little coin was to his dear mother.

There was nothing he liked more than watching her make bread. She would take a measure or two full of wheat and go out to the grinding stone. When he was very little she used to get a neighbor woman to help her turn the grinding mill with its two handles, but when he got big enough he used to help her turn it himself. After the wheat was thoroughly ground into flour, she put it into a kneading pan and poured in the yeast, which they called leaven. It took a little while for them to mix. The leaven would begin to act on the flour by making little, tiny bubbles, and after a while the bubbles would run through all the flour in the pan and it would slowly rise until it filled the entire pan full of dough. Jesus

always remembered just how this looked and he would use it later, as he did also the lost coin, as a parable story. Sometimes they had to borrow bread from their neighbors when unexpected visitors came, and then Mary would bake a larger lot than usual and pay it back. All such events were remembered and used afterward in the talks to poor people who understood the stories perfectly well, for just such things had happened in their homes, and so they listened eagerly.

It gave the happy boy a very great joy to hear the stories of his own people which his mother told to him evenings out of the Old Testament. He heard how Abraham believed God; how Joseph was faithful and saved all his family in the great famine; how Moses led his people out of bondage in Egypt; and how Joshua went through the Jordan on into the promised land. Then there was the story of little David which no one ever could forget. There was the won-

derful deliverance of Daniel from the fierce lions, and the marvelous escape of the three Hebrews from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. Later, as he could understand, he heard of the great work of the Prophets and he listened to the poetry of the Psalms and Job's beautiful passage about the Pleiades, Orion and Arcturus. They were all thrilling and wonderful things, but the thing, you may be sure, that moved him most was what he learned through these stories of his heavenly Father. Many times after she had been talking to him, she would see him sitting quietly in the dim corner of the room, thinking, meditating, wondering.

More and more he loved to be in the fields. It seemed as though the flowers and the birds and the little brooks and the sunrise helped him to understand God better. These things made him more sure of the love and the care and the infinite goodness of the great All-Father.

When he was twelve years old and was beginning to be very helpful to Joseph in the carpenter shop, the family decided to take Jesus up to Jerusalem for the famous Passover celebration. It was a wonderful event. People came from all over the world to celebrate it, and there would be immense crowds. He would see his relatives from different towns. He would be able to gaze upon and even enter the glorious temple of the holy city. He would stand on the very spot where the greatest heroes of his race had stood. Nobody could fail to be moved over the prospect of such a journey. Harder than ever Joseph had worked to get money enough for the journey, and Mary had woven new clothes for the event and had baked enough bread for them to carry, to eat with their figs and dates.

"Azaz" was dead, but they had bought another donkey to take his place, and Mary rode as before; the others walked, except for

an occasional ride when Mary walked for a change which seemed like a rest.

The road lay, as of old, along the great backbone ridge of Palestine, going through the ancient, historic towns where great deeds had been done, centuries before by the men and women whose stories were in the Old Testament. At last Jerusalem was in sight, which no boy of the Jewish race could see without having all his being thrill. Would the time ever come, he wondered, when that dear city would be free from Roman rule and be again as it had been in the days of the Prophets, the real city of God!

The Passover was a wonderful event. It flooded everybody's mind with memories of what God had done for Israel. They thought of the Red Sea and the escape from Pharaoh. They thought of the long story of God's care in the great crises of the nation's life. And they ate their roasted lamb and their bread, made on this occasion without

leaven, with their hearts full of thanksgiving to the Lord. After the feast was over and all the celebration had come to an end, the bands of pilgrims prepared to return to their distant homes. Each group had found many relatives and friends and they traveled back together in large companies. Joseph and Mary had left Jesus in company with friends and relatives and they supposed that he was following close behind them in the large throng which made up the returning party. At the end of a long day's journey toward home, the scattered families gathered together to spend the night. When Joseph and Mary began to search for Jesus they failed to find him. Back and forth they went through the crowds of travelers, calling him by name and searching more eagerly than Mary had searched for the lost coin, but he could not be found. There was no sleep for them. They turned their course backward toward the city they had left, and urged the tired

donkey onward until in the morning they were once more in Jerusalem.

They went at once with all haste to the place where they lived during the celebration of the great feast. He was not there. Then they went in turn to all the houses where any of their many relatives lived. He was not in any of the homes. They asked everybody they met if they had seen a certain little boy whom they described. Nobody had seen him. They visited the Pool of Bethesda with its wonderful bubbling water, which the cripples and diseased people all believed would cure their troubles. There were throngs there but they found him not. The entire day was gone before they knew it. The city had been searched and yet they had not found their lost treasure. They blamed themselves for having lost him. They thought back over each movement they had made, each street they had visited before starting for Nazareth, in the hope that they

might get some clue of where he had become separated from them. No help lay anywhere or in anything.

Poor Mary had more than she could bear. She had not slept; she had not eaten for twenty-four hours. Defeated and discouraged she wept with a deep cry of suffering that touched every one's heart. Her night was a long and pitiful one. When for a few moments she fell into a brief sleep she had disturbing dreams in which she saw one danger after another threatening her beloved child.

Finally, in the middle of the night she became perfectly calm. A change came over her spirit as though a new and deep light had shone into her soul. She wondered why she had not trusted her heavenly Father better, why she had not sooner turned to *Him* for help. She knew that He painted the glorious morning sky, that he wove the robe of the lily more beautiful than Solomon's,

that He cared for the bird flying home to her nest, and she knew, or she ought to have known, that His everlasting arms would be underneath to keep and guard a pure and lovely child made in His own image. As these thoughts rose in her mind she lay down and slept peacefully until morning, and as soon as she wakened she felt sure they ought to go to the temple, which strangely enough they had not visited before.

They ate a hasty breakfast and then went to look through the temple. It was a huge building with many departments and many rooms, and they went through one part after another of the splendid edifice. They had no time to notice the glory of the place, for they were thinking of only one thing as they went from room to room. However, they were no longer excited; they were calm and controlled.

At length they came to the part of the temple where the doctors of the law and the

learned Scribes, who were the great scholars of that time, had their meeting place to discuss the problems of the holy law. Joseph thought the boy would certainly not be there. There could be nothing there that would interest a boy. But Mary was not so sure, she knew another side of the wonderful boy. She said, "I think, Joseph, it would be quite like him to be in that room, where men are trying to discover the truth. Let us quickly look there." And just there he was found.

He had got separated from his family the day before and so he had been left behind in the city. Most boys would have been filled with fear to find themselves left behind and all alone in a big city. Jesus felt no fear. He was sure his family would come back for him. He found a place to sleep for the night and in the morning he had gone early to the temple.

He was sitting among the great Rabbis and he was not a bit afraid. He was asking them

questions of things he had wondered about all his young life. He was surprised to find how little they knew about real things. The things they did know all seemed so useless. Then he heard his mother's voice and he felt her arms around him. He knew that she knew many things about which the doctors of the law knew nothing. He left the room quietly and went out hand in hand with Mary. "Didn't you know, mother," he said, "that I would be there trying to find out the truth? There are so many things I want to know that I was sure to go where there were men who are supposed to know. As long as I live in this world I want to be about my Father's business."

Mary wondered almost more at the look of beauty and light that was on his face than she did at his words, so unusual for a boy. Then, in great joy, they returned together to Nazareth and to the heavy work of the carpenter shop.

CHAPTER V

THE UNKNOWN YEARS

FROM twelve to thirty are the great years when a person forms his life. At twelve years you hardly know what you want or what you want to be. At thirty you have decided and are beginning to find what you have set your mind to seek.

Nobody has told us about these momentous years in the life of Jesus. We jump across from twelve to thirty with no account of what happened in between. But a great deal must have happened. Can we guess what he was doing in the unveiled years before the world heard of him? Luke, in his Gospel, says that he increased in size and in

wisdom. That means that he grew up from being a child to being a man, and it means that he was discovering what life really is and learning the things he was going to live by.

We know that he must have spent much time in the fields, living with nature, for he always loved the flowers, the birds, the sky, the lake, and the hilltops. The little town of Nazareth, in which he lived, was on the slopes of a small mountain. The narrow streets were made in terraces on the hillside and curving around in a great circle were fourteen other splendid hill peaks. What a place for such a boy to live in! Here he learned to climb zig-zag paths, to wander away by rushing brooks, and to work his way up steep, rocky, wooded slopes. Here he learned to know the birds of Galilee, and the great variety of flowers which the different seasons put forth in fields and woods. Here, too, he learned to love the peace and quiet of

high hilltops, and he learned to feel that, alone by himself with the wonders of the world of beauty around him, he could find the heavenly Father very real and very near. No wonder that he grew in size and in wisdom!

There was a school in Nazareth, joined to the Synagogue, and here the boys of the town learned the Law and the Prophets, the poetry and the stories of the Old Testament. A Rabbi or some Scribe taught them as they sat in a semicircle on the floor by his feet. Here we may well believe that Jesus sat and recited by heart the Book of Leviticus and heard the Rabbi explain the meaning of all the multitude of laws which filled the Book. Deuteronomy, with its love and care for animals, with its lofty command to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength and with its tender regard for the poor, the weak, and the stranger would touch him much more and leave its deep lessons in

his mind. Most of all he would love the Prophets and the Psalms, for they were closer in spirit to his own life and his own thought of God. It is easy to see through all his later talks with Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees that he knew the Bible much better than they did. "Have you not read?" he asks them. "Do you not know what the Scriptures say?" "You search the Scriptures," he told them, "but you never notice what they really say."

But however much Jesus may possibly have learned in the little Synagogue school of Nazareth he learned far more from his mother in the daily home life. There is no teacher like a wise, good mother. She would teach him through stories of the heroes of the nation. She would show what the teachings of the Great Book meant by living them and by doing them. She would explain each one of the great national feasts and festivals and tell him its noble origin and history, and

then she would keep each one as it came in turn in such a way that all the family would enter into the spirit of the past and of God's marvelous dealings with His people. There were at least three younger brothers in the family and that added of course very much to the joy of the celebrations. You can find out something about two of the brothers of Jesus by reading the books they wrote—the Epistle of James and the little Book of Jude.

One thing which always stood out wherever Jesus was, whether in the school or in the home or in the village, was the purity of his life. It made everybody wonder at him. Other boys said rude, rough words. They did mean things. They played unfair tricks. They got angry and showed spite. Their thoughts and words were not always clean. Jesus was different, always different, very different. He was not, however, what boys sometimes call "goody-goody." He was strong and manly. He was interesting. He

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
NORFOLK AVE. AND NINTH ST.

made you stop and think when he spoke or when he did things. There was a pure light in his face which you could never forget. He took no end of pains to help other boys. If any one did an unkind thing to him Jesus always found out how to do something to that same boy which made the boy see how true and kind and friendly Jesus was in spite of it, and sooner or later the unkind boy found it hard to be unkind to Jesus. Little by little boys felt ashamed to say impure words and to do improper things when they were with him. They felt that such things did not fit. Nobody in Nazareth in later years could ever remember any evil thing they had seen him do or any unkind word they had heard him say.

He walked and talked, he played and worked with the other boys and with the young people of the village. He never felt himself too "good" to join with any boy

there was in his town, but through all the fellowship and companionship he was as pure as mountain snowflakes, as straight and true as a ray of light. It seemed as though there were no evil in his nature and as though he was showing the world how it was possible to grow up and be a happy, joyous boy, and to keep entirely free from hate and sin and fear. Whatever he might do afterward by the shores of Gennesaret or in the city of Jerusalem nothing in his life was more wonderful or more beautiful than the purity of his boyhood. There are little, tiny animals so transparent that you can see through them and see their hearts beat and see their lungs breathe. Jesus was like that. His life was so pure that you could see his soul radiate like sunlight through all he did and in all he said.

Sometime during his boyhood kind old Joseph, the head of the home and the support of the family, must have died and left

them without his help to earn the food by which they lived. On Jesus there must have fallen at first the burden of support for the home, as his brothers were younger. He must now have become the carpenter in the little shop in place of Joseph. He would not now play with shavings and with sawdust as when he was a little child. He would work hard and long at heavy labor. One day he would make a new table for the Synagogue. Another day he would repair a door in a neighbor's house. Again he would build a cupboard for a woman to keep her loaves of bread in. He would very often find little children in his shop, children who had learned to love him because he was so kind and gentle with them. They would ask him to make them something. Then the heavy, important things would be left while he made a cart for a little boy or an odd Syrian plaything for a bright-eyed girl who laughed and shouted as she took the precious

The young carpenter

thing from his hands. Sometimes he made in his shop a simple wooden bier to be used to carry to the grave the body of one who had died,—an old man, a little child, or the son of a poor, lonely widow. As Jesus worked with his tools at the boards for the bier and shaped it for its solemn purpose, you may be sure that his heart was very tender for those who had suffered the loss of their dear one, and you may also be certain that on these occasions he thought much about life and death and all that they mean for men and women and little children.

As the years went by with the daily task of the carpenter shop Jesus came more and more to love the work which his skillful hands could do. There was real joy in creating something that did not exist before. He enjoyed the healthy exercise. He was thankful that he could make his hands serve others. And it seemed like real living to share in toil and labor with great masses of

toilers all over the world. All his meals seemed sweeter to him because he had done something to provide the food and because he could do something for the dear mother who had done so much for him.

But all the time during the later years of his work in the shop he knew in his heart that he was not always to be a carpenter. Something stirred deep down in his soul and made him feel sure that a time was coming when he must go out into the great busy world and teach men how to live. He would sometimes stop sawing the beam on which he was working and stand quite still, lost in thought, as though out through the open door of his shop and far away from quiet Nazareth he *saw* great groups of people who needed him and who were waiting for him to come. There were other times when he laid down his tools, sat down on the shavings piled up in a corner of the shop and thought, not about hills or about flowers

or about people. He thought about God. It seemed then as though some fresh air had come in from a purer world, or as though some one had brought him joyous news, or as though some long expected event had suddenly happened and he had just heard of it. The light came stronger than ever in his face, a fresh joy broke over him. He seemed to have found what he wanted.

Once in these days there was a rich man in Nazareth who had arranged to give a great feast. He invited all the best families of the village to come. He made great preparations for it days before it came. He had the best things to eat that could be got from all the country around. He had flowers and perfumes all ready for his guests and many servants in fine suits were to wait upon them. But when the day came for the feast all the invited guests sent word to say they could not come. Each one gave some excuse. One man regretted that he could not come because

he had just bought a farm outside the village and he wanted to go to see it. Another one said that he had bought a yoke of oxen and he must go and try them, so that he begged off from the feast. Still another one had just got married and could not leave his wife. So the excuses ran on. When the rich man heard the long list of excuses he was angry. He felt that he had been badly treated. He said, "I will never have one of those people in my house again. I will send out my servants and invite the poor people in. The workers and the toilers in the fields and in the shops shall come and eat my splendid dinner which I have prepared." You may be sure that Jesus would be invited in this last group and that he would leave his beams and his tools and put on his best robe and go to the feast with the other workers.

This unusual dinner gave him a new idea about God. He said to himself this is what God has been doing. He has called these

chosen people, these fine respectable people, to come to His great feast. He has offered them His love and His favor, but they do not come. They are interested in other things. Now the time has come when God is going to invite the poor, the weary, and the heavy laden, those who toil and suffer. And slowly but surely Jesus came to see that he himself was to leave his shop and his home, and go out into the world and carry this wonderful invitation to God's great feast.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAKING OF A PROPHET

WHILE Jesus was working as a boy in the carpenter shop at Nazareth, another boy was growing up in the hill country of Judea. His name was John. His mother Elizabeth was a cousin of Mary, and they sometimes visited each other. John's father was a priest, and occasionally, though he was now an old man, he was called to Jerusalem to take his turn with the other priests in the performance of the temple sacrifices. They lived in the country on a steep hillside where they had a small vineyard. It was a wild, rugged spot. There were high, jagged rocks on the hill above their little house. Below

the rocks there was a thicket of woods and of heavy brush, while below the house there was a gorge with a headlong, rushing brook, which in spring became flooded with water and roared and plunged along its rocky bed, making wonderful masses of foam.

John was a strange, unusual boy. He played by himself, but he almost never played with other boys. There were no neighbors near, for John's house was separated and lonely, but he would not have cared to play with them if there had been boys within easy reach. He liked to be alone. He felt strange and uncomfortable when he was with other boys. He enjoyed doing things by himself. He had made a little water wheel, which he put in the brook, where he had built a dam to hold the water back. This was when the water was low in summer time. He could not build a dam in the spring, for the mad water then swept everything along with its mighty force.

Many hours he spent repairing his wheel, improving his dam, and enjoying the sound of the water splashing or purling over the rocks.

More often he used to go into the lonely thicket where he had a little seat in the branching limbs of a tree. Here he would sit listening to the birds, watching the curious slugs crawling along without any legs, gathering snails, picking wood flowers, seeing the ants build their homes and carry their food and their eggs. But a good deal of the time he just sat still, in the quiet, without doing anything or watching anything. He was thinking. Sometimes he would look up through the tops of the trees at the sky for half an hour at a time. Sometimes he would gaze, without moving, at an old log which had decayed and was the home of a thousand forms of life. Perhaps he was not noticing these things. He was half dreaming, half thinking. It was more natural for him

to think and wonder than it was to talk or to be active. In the autumn when his father crushed the grapes in the hillside vineyard and made wine of them, John would never taste it. He would sometimes eat the ripe grapes, but he would never drink a drop of wine, because some of the saints he read about in the Old Testament never drank wine and he wanted to be like them. Sometimes when important guests came to visit them, his old father, Zacharias, would go to the cellar cave and bring in a wine skin and pour out a cup full of sparkling red wine for each guest and then for the members of the family. John would watch the bubbles run through the wine as his father poured it from the skin, but when his turn came to have a cup of it he always said, "No, I shall never drink any wine so long as I live."

He was odd and peculiar about his clothes. After he was twelve years old he never

wanted to wear clothes like other boys. He had his own way of dressing himself. Other boys enjoyed bright colors on their tunics. John had no bright colors on anything he wore, and as for a tunic he never had one. He wore only a single garment, made as a loose robe with sleeves. He gathered his loose robe up around his waist and fastened it with a leather girdle. This garment was woven out of camel's hair and so was coarse and rough, and was kept in its natural color. At first it pricked his tender skin and made him feel sore all over his body, but he soon got used to it and after a little he hardly thought at all of its roughness. Naturally, however, everybody else noticed this strange, odd garb; especially did the other boys notice it whenever he joined them. John seemed always to take it for granted that he was to be different from other people and he did not mind the funny looks of the boys, their pointings and their whisperings.

He made up his mind when he was still very young that he would live a pure life. He resolved to eat only clean, pure things, things that would make him strong and not injure him. He would drink only pure water as it flowed from the springs. He would speak only truthful words that would express exactly what he meant. He would think only pure thoughts, refusing to let any low or impure thoughts or wishes or desires *stay* in his mind, even if they should flit across it, like swift birds across a pond. He was determined not to show fear or anger or hatred, no matter what might happen. He resolved to become the kind of person God could use for His work and therefore he would not do anything that would spoil or weaken or waste his life.

Hours at a time he sat in the thicket, pondering on what his life was to be. He knew that he was not going to be a rich man, for he cared nothing about money. He never

asked his father for any, and if he ever earned any pennies he always put them at once in the money box for his father and mother to use. He was not going to be a priest, like his father, because he would never kill an animal, and priests had to kill animals for sacrifices in the temple. He could not make up his mind what his life was going to be like. He would not be a farmer and make wine. He would not be a butcher and kill animals. He would not be a tax man—he hated that business the most of all. What could this strange boy do, what could he be?

As he listened to the rolls of Scripture which the Scribe read on the Sabbath Day in the Synagogue he wished that he might be a prophet, like Elijah or Elisha or Jeremiah, and help make the wicked world right. Then he learned to read in the little Synagogue School a mile away, and he got at length so that he could read the rolls him-

self and always he selected the rolls to read that told about prophets and how they preached against sin and wickedness. Stern old Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, came to be his favorite prophet. He would turn again and again to the place in the roll where the prophet Amos saw the Lord holding a plumb-line in His hand, testing everybody's life to see if it was plumb, and trying the life of the nation to see if it stood four square on its basis and was built to stand the shakings of the other nations. "Ah," thought John, sitting in his lonely seat in the thicket, "I should like to be a prophet, to speak for God and to tell the people how to escape destruction and save themselves from disaster."

John's father and mother, you see, belonged to "the Quiet Ones in the Land." Their home was like the home of Joseph and Mary and like the home of Simeon. Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were very much alike and had the

same ideas. John's parents were poor and simple and humble but they were devout, they loved God. They tried to do right and they wanted to live like the men who wrote the Psalms which they loved so much. They were always thinking how they could make their lives better and truer and nobler. And something of their pure spirit had got into the soul of John. He had heard them pray with all their hearts that God would guide their boy, and little by little he grew to be the kind of boy they had hoped him to be.

Besides the rolls of the Old Testament there were some rolls of another book in this hillside country home. They were rolls of the Book of Enoch. You understand, of course, that there were no printed books in the world then. Instead of books like ours their books were written on rolls of thin leather, called parchment, which you unrolled with one hand as you read, and rolled up with the other hand. The Book of Enoch

was a strange and remarkable Book. Everybody thought it had been written by Enoch, the father of Methuselah, and that made them love it all the more, because Enoch had been an almost perfect man and God had taken him to heaven before he died. This Book of Enoch set John to thinking more than anything he had read or heard. It told more clearly about God's Kingdom than any other book did. It explained what it would be like. It made John understand that this Kingdom was near at hand and that God was to send some one to be the Head and Leader of it. It also gave him the idea that a great prophet would come—some one like Elijah or Amos or Jeremiah—before the Kingdom was set up, and this prophet would be the forerunner of the person who was to be the King or Messiah of the expected Kingdom.

Over and over again John read these rolls sitting in his lonely thicket where he meditated and wondered over what he read.

Then he read the roll of the Book of Daniel which told him a great deal more about the Kingdom and about the Son of Man "to whom was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him, and his dominion shall be an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom shall never be destroyed." He also had some Psalms which everybody thought were written by the great King Solomon, the son of David, and these Psalms told still more about the Kingdom and the King. One of these Psalms said: "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto us our King, the Son of David, in the time which thou, O Lord, knowest, that He may reign over Israel, thy servant. He shall gather together a holy people whom He shall lead in righteousness; and He shall judge the tribes of the people that hath been sanctified by the Lord his God. And he shall not faint all his days because He leaneth upon His

God; for God shall cause Him to be mighty through the spirit of holiness and wise through the counsel of understanding with might and righteousness. Blessed are they that shall be born in those days to behold the blessings of Israel which God shall bring to pass."

You can imagine how John thrilled as he read those words and felt sure in his soul that the time was near and that he himself might live to see those days of blessing.

When John was talking one day with his gentle, aged father, now lovely with his crown of white hair, the boy all radiant with his hopes for the future said, "Father, I believe God's time is drawing near. I think the Highest will come and dwell among us and perhaps—who knows?—I may yet be a prophet to prepare the way for Him."

Then the aged Zacharias was filled with joy and raised his hands in thankgsiving. Quietly he told his dear son that that was,

too, his own hope and had been for many years, and then he drew out of his bosom some lines which he had written when John was a tiny baby. "Yea, my son," the old man slowly said, "I will read thee a few of the words I wrote when thou wert a dear babe in thy mother's arms. There were more words, but these few I will tell thee:

"Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto His people
In the remission of their sins,
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,
To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death;
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

CHAPTER VII

BY THE FORDS OF THE JORDAN

ONE day a man appeared by the fords of the Jordan at a busy place where the roads came down to the river, and he called upon the people to repent and change their lives. He wore a camel's hair garment fastened with a leather belt around his waist. His hair and his beard were uncut and very long. His eyes were piercing and he looked straight through people. He ate no meat; he drank no wine. He lived on the simplest food such as could be found in the wilderness or the desert—nothing but pods from the locust tree or honey which the wild bees made from the wild flowers and stored in hollow trees. A

man is very much like a boy, only grown older. And this strange preacher by the Jordan was the same John who grew up in the hill country of Judea and who thought and wondered when other boys were playing.

He was many years older now. He had left his home a long time ago, but he had not gone to the city to learn business nor had he gone to some famous school to prepare himself to be a preacher. He had gone away alone into the jungle regions along the Jordan banks to think and wonder still more, and to let God teach him in the stillness and the solitude. He was not afraid of anything in the world and he liked to be alone. Flowers and birds and animals were his best friends and he loved them all. The rippling water of the Jordan as it rushed over the pebbly shore stirred his heart much more than the music of a harp did. He would lie for hours during the night and watch the clouds in the moonlight float by the tops of

the trees or he would gaze with joy and reverence at the silent stars in the gorgeous Syrian sky.

But one thing above everything else was in his mind both by day and by night, "When is the new Kingdom going to come. What will it be like? What can I do to help to bring it?" Little by little, as a snowball grows when you roll it in the soft snow, John's thoughts grew bigger and bigger, his hopes grew larger and larger, his faith in God increased and enlarged. At last when he was a full-grown man he felt sure that God wanted him now to go back to the world where men lived and to call them away from sin to pure, good lives, for it seemed to him that the new Kingdom could not come until the world began to get ready for it. He would help people get ready. He would tell them what was evil and wrong. He would cry out against injustice and against wicked things. He would make men afraid of what

was going to come upon them if they kept on doing bad deeds. He would be God's prophet to speak the truth about things.

There he was. That was what he was doing by the fords of the Jordan. At first a few people came. They were powerfully moved by his face and by his voice and by his words. They told the other people in the towns and villages and soon crowds began to come. You would not expect that John would tell them sweet and gentle things. He had lost all fear. He dared to say what he knew was true. He gave the people a vivid account of their lives. He told them what would happen to them if they went on just as they were going. He pictured a man winnowing his grain after the threshing was done. He throws the grain into the air and lets the wind blow out all the chaff, and then the good-for-nothing chaff is heaped into a great pile and burned up with fire.

"What can you expect will be done to you,"

John

he cries, "if your lives are worthless like the chaff, if you have nothing in you that God can use? When a man has an orchard of fruit trees he goes through it and examines the trees to see which ones bear good fruit and which ones are useless, or have poor, sour fruit on them. Then he makes his ax as sharp as possible and cuts down the worthless trees clear to the root. You had better look out if your lives are useless or perhaps worse than useless. God is getting ready to make a new and different world, and if you are going along a crooked way, you must get into a straight one at once or you will wish you had done so. Repent. Change your course. Turn squarely about. Stop your sins. Do what is right. Get your hearts clean. Show the proof that you have changed your course. See to it that your soul is pure and that your deeds are good."

Everybody could see that John meant every word of what he said. Those eyes of his

looked right into one's soul, and little boys who heard him would think of these eyes and of his words, whenever they started to do anything wrong. Even hardened men who did very wicked things and had formed evil habits came back from the Jordan with real hope that they might once more be good.

One day a strange thing happened. Soldiers had come to hear the great preacher. Tax men had been there to hear his words. Scribes and Pharisees, who thought themselves perfect, had trembled as he revealed their secret sins to them. All these had gone away home. The crowds had withdrawn. The evening was approaching. A beautiful sunset light flashed across the ripples of the river. The birds were singing in the trees on the shore. The air was still. The hills beyond the Jordan had a halo of glory on their tops. John was about to eat his simple meal of pods and honey but a footstep not far away attracted his attention and arrested

his preparations. Some one was approaching over the hill toward the west. It was a man still young and very striking to behold. John could see his face in the clear evening light. He noticed at once in the first glance how different it was from the faces of his listeners during the day. There were no hard lines upon it, no marks of sin, no signs of hypocrisy or deceit. It was as pure as it was beautiful, and was as beautiful as it was pure. He came straight on unafraid and unembarrassed. His step was strong and quick, as of a person in full health and vigor. He wore the clothes of a laborer but they were neat and clean. His hands showed the signs of hard work but they were fine and delicate hands none the less. As the traveler came near John seemed remarkably moved. No man had ever given him fear before, and yet he was trembling, plainly trembling. Something new was happening to him. He who could make the boldest man quail with his

piercing eyes and searching voice now bowed with humility and stood hushed in awed silence.

In the first swift glance John knew that it was Jesus who was coming toward him. Their families were akin and had visited in each other's homes when John was a boy. He had stood in the carpenter shop and had seen Jesus working with his plane and saw. He had always felt a sense of awe before him. He could hardly tell why; only it was so. He knew by a sure instinct that no other boy had ever been like this boy, and he knew now, as he saw the Galilean young man coming, that no man whom he had ever met was like this young man there before him. In a moment they were together and Jesus was quietly saying a few fitting words of greeting to his cousin, and then they began to talk of important things.

Jesus had come to take the opening step of his great mission in the world. He knew

that John baptized his visitors whenever they were ready to leave their course and to enter upon a new way of life. They were baptized as a sign of their great change and of the new career. Jesus was now leaving his carpenter shop and his period of preparation behind and was about to enter upon a public mission of love and service, and he desired to mark the step by the well-known sign which others took.

At first this bold and fearless man who inspired awe in all others, felt that he could not do it. To all others he had said, "Repent." He could not say it to Jesus. To everybody else he had said, "You must completely turn about and change your ways." He could not use these words to Jesus. He knew that Jesus' ways did not need to be changed. He could not talk now about chaff and bad fruit trees that ought to be cut down. He saw before him the purest person that had ever lived and he could only say, "I

would that thou might give *thy* blessing to me. I can surely do nothing for thee."

Calmly, quietly, and with words which no one could resist, the Galilean told John this step was important for his mission, that he had come all the way from Nazareth to perform the act which was to be the sign and symbol that all which had been was left behind and that a new stage was beginning. Without further delay and with no more words, John did what Jesus wished and the step was taken.

As Jesus came up from the water and climbed the bank of the famous river, rich in the myriad colors reflected from the sunset sky, something new and wonderful happened. Jesus had long felt that a mission of service for God lay before him. But now in a sudden flash of light he saw more clearly than he had ever done before the meaning of it. He felt, too, an unusual flood of new power flow into himself. It seemed as though the

sky opened above him and God came through to him and shared His life and love with him. He felt as though he could hear divine words spoken to his soul. He knew, as clearly as a child knows when it suddenly finds its parent, that he had found his Father and was being sent out into the world to do His work, with His call and His approval. It was a great moment, there by the sunset-lighted shore. John had quickly taken his sandals from his feet and was standing with bowed head and reverent face—knowing now that the One had come for whom he had long waited, the One who was to go beyond him and his work and be the bringer of the Kingdom.

For many days after this scene by the Jordan, Jesus was in the lonely wilderness along the banks of the river, meditating, praying, thinking, considering how he should do his work in the world, how he should begin and what kind of a life he should live

among men, and what kind of a Kingdom he should call them to. He knew that everybody expected a mighty deliverer who should break the yoke of Rome, a wonder-worker who should be able to change stones to bread, a person with such miraculous powers that he could leap from the top of the temple without being injured. He knew that if he came claiming to be able to do these things all the people would follow him and flock after him. But he knew in his heart that this was not the work God had for *him* to do. He saw another course, another way of life, much more difficult, very unpopular and full of danger. It was, however, he knew, the true way, the right way, and God's way. And there alone in the wilderness, weary and hungry, he came to his great decision—the greatest decision any one ever made. He refused forever to take the wrong way, the easy way, the popular way. He resolved to follow the light in his soul which had always

led him right as a boy in Nazareth. He came forth pale and worn, but radiant, and determined to see what a life of love would do to change men's hearts and lives. He proposed to teach a new way which he felt sure was God's way.

CHAPTER VIII

FOUR BOYS WHO BECAME DISCIPLES

If boys had a chance to select the place where they were going to grow up and pass the period of their youth, most of them, I think, would prefer to have their home on the shore of a lake. The four boys about whom I am going to tell you now were born where they had this happy privilege without even choosing it. When they first opened their eyes on the wonder of the world, they saw the many-colored lights reflected from the ripples of the lake, and the first noises they ever heard were the noises of great waves breaking on the rocky shores. The first things that attracted their notice in their

homes were the catches of fish which their fathers brought in — fish still alive and flapping.

These boys were named Andrew, Simon, James, and John. Andrew and Simon were brothers. So also were James and John. The two pairs of brothers lived in homes close together. Their fathers were lifelong friends and fellow fishermen. James and John were twins. Andrew was the same age as they were, while Simon had been born a short year after they were born. Their homes were little houses with flat roofs near the edge of the Lake of Gennesaret, just outside the crowded town of Capernaum. Still nearer the lake their fathers had a large boathouse in common, where they kept their boats, oars, sails, anchors, nets, fishing tackle, and a multitude of other things which interest boys. Here the four boys had played ever since they could remember anything and most of the great events that had come to

them had happened in this same boat-house.

These four boys were very different from each other. James did not seem like a twin brother of John. Simon was not a bit like Andrew. Their mothers found out very soon that these boys were not *made* the same way. Each one had his own peculiar disposition, set and fixed. What pleased one did not always please the other. They all loved the lake but they had different ways of showing their love for it and different ways of acting under all circumstances.

John was from the very first the sweetest natured of the group. He was a lovely child, beautiful to look at, and always happy. His mother, who was named Salome, knew when he was a tiny baby that "there never was such a child." He didn't cry, except when something "real" was the matter. He smiled so beautifully that he seemed like a little cherub that had strayed away from

Andrew and Simon

heaven. Simon was quite the opposite. He cried over the least bit of trouble. He got angry and broke things. He passed from one scene of difficulty to another. All the accidents seemed to happen to him. Nobody ever called *him* a cherub. He meant well but he was unlucky. He had a way of doing the wrong thing and of having even his good intentions turn out to be bad blunders. When he appeared a storm was expected to follow soon. James and Andrew, on the other hand, were somewhat alike. They were just ordinary boys. They were neither very good nor very bad. They did not stand out like the other two. Of course James had an easier life at home than Andrew did for it was much easier to get on with John than it was to get on with Simon, who always wanted to play, but who was sure to make trouble before any game was over, because he always wanted to play the leading part.

At first they were not allowed to go out in the boat because they did not know how to sit still and keep quiet while their fathers were fishing. So they played in the sand on the beach, splashed and paddled in the water, caught minnows and tadpoles, ran races, made sand forts, and helped sort the fish when their fathers landed and pulled in their boat. They tangled each other up in the immense nets and little Simon found plenty of things to cry about.

As they grew bigger first one and then another was allowed to go out in the boat on the fishing excursions, though they were never taken out *together*. John was the first to go because he was sure to be good in the boat. It was a wonderful experience and very thrilling. They used the sail to carry the boat out to the fishing grounds, but when they came back with the wind against them and the boat loaded with fish, Zebedee and Simon's father both rowed with all their

might. Little John sat in the stern of the boat and was taught how to steer with the rudder. You can imagine how the other three boys felt when they saw the boat coming in with John, quite wet with spray, proudly steering the boat to its port as the two strong men sent it forward with their powerful strokes.

Soon each one of the boys had a lesson in steering, then in rowing, and finally they were taught how to handle the dangerous sail, and how to throw out and pull in the small nets. The big nets came later. Simon was the littlest but he was never behind the others. In fact he pulled in the small net full of fish before any of the others had made a catch. The time soon came when they were allowed to go out all together and to take a regular part in the management of the boat and in the work of fishing. It was hard work but it was at the same time the greatest possible fun. It was full of excitement. There was often

danger about it and there was always something new happening.

These boys quickly lost fear. At first the big waves frightened then and the tipping of the boat in the trough of the sea scared them, but this sense of fear soon passed. They came to love the motion of the boat and they cried with delight when the big waves broke over it. The element of danger added something to their joy. After they had learned to swim they gained a sense of power over the water. Occasionally, however, they had terrifying experiences. Gennesaret was a treacherous lake. The hills and steep shores acted like great funnels through which the wind rushed down and plowed the water into furious furrows. Sometimes the lake would change in a few minutes from almost calm to the wildest scene of turmoil, and the boat would seem like an eggshell swept along at the mercy of angry billows. Sometimes in these sudden squalls the boys were

forced to throw all their fish overboard to lighten the boat and enable it to ride the mighty waves. John never showed the least sign of fear in these times of crisis. Sitting at the rudder, as he usually did, with a fine color on his face, he held the boat as well as he could across the waves so as to avoid the dangerous hollows, and showed the nerve and spirit of a man.

As time went on and the boys grew big and strong the lake became almost the whole of their life. They seemed to be as much a part of the scene as the hills were. Everybody knew them and everybody learned to count upon them. When their boat put in to the shore everybody expected to see a pretty catch of fish. The years as they passed improved Simon. He was still a strange youth but there were fine traits in him. He was quick and rash but he would often do brave and generous deeds. He seldom stopped to think. Ideas flashed into his mind

and with a rush the thing was done. Sometimes it was right and sometimes it was wrong. If it turned out to be wrong he would be very sorry afterward and decide never to do such a thing again, but, alas, another flash would come and he would rush once more into a foolish act. Many times as the boat neared the shore with its load of fish, Simon would suddenly drop his oar and leap into the water and swim like a great fish alongside the boat. It upset all order, splashed the others with water, and made it difficult for John to steer the boat. Simon promised each time when he was scolded that he would not do it again. But as soon as the impulse came over him he was pretty sure to "forget" and leap in once more, especially if there were people on the shore who would see him do it.

These boys did not always talk about boats and nets and fish. They had another interest which was very great. They talked about it

almost as much as they talked about the lake. That was the coming of the Messiah and His wonderful Kingdom. They all had different ideas about it, but they all thought He would come soon. They used to lie on the grass by the shore of the lake after they had eaten their luncheon of bread and broiled fish and imagine what the new Kingdom would be like. "The new King will teach us how to love one another," John would say. "I think He will smite these Romans and set us all free," was James' guess. "I believe He will purify the temple and give us better priests in Jerusalem so that we can worship God as we ought to do," Andrew would declare. "He will be a great King like David," Simon would say, "only he will be much more wonderful, divine and heavenly. When people see Him they will bow down before Him and obey His last word. He will do miracles which will surprise everybody and He will make Jerusalem a perfect

city and it will become the capital of all the world. I wish He would come soon and call me to be one of His men."

When John the baptizer came out of the wilderness and stirred the people with his preaching, the four fisher boys, now grown into young men, went all together to hear him. His words moved them as nothing else ever had. They had lived in a town where there was much that was evil and wrong. They saw and heard wicked things, and they often did things themselves which something in their souls told them they ought not to do. Simon especially felt that his whole life had been full of mistakes and failures. He was ready to take John's baptism and wash all his past life away. They all confessed their sins to John, were baptized and returned to Capernaum with lighter hearts. But they soon found that they slid back very easily into their old ways and habits. They still lacked something. They did not have the power to

be as good as they meant to be. Simon still found that he kept doing things which he "didn't mean to do."

One fine day when they had come from their fishing trip, their two boats empty, for they had fished all night and had caught nothing, though their nets were badly torn, they found a host of people on the shore and a remarkable looking stranger among them. While they were washing their nets and getting ready to mend them the stranger stepped into one of the boats and asked Simon to row him out a little way from the shore. Then he sat on one of the boat seats and began to talk to the people. It was a most unusual and wonderful talk. The people had never heard anything like it. It made God seem perfectly real and like a Father to them all. Simon listened as he had never listened to anything in his life, and John's face grew more beautiful than ever.

When the stranger finished speaking he

turned to Simon and said, "Row out a little farther and let down your nets." "It won't do any good," Simon answered. "We have fished all night and we know that there are not any fish out there." Jesus, for that is who the stranger was, said no words but looked Simon straight in the face with such a look that at once he took the oars and rowed the boat to the place where Jesus pointed. Then he and Andrew let down the nets. When they tried to pull them in they caught so many fish that the nets were in danger of breaking and they called to James and John to hurry out with the other boat to help them land the great catch. There were so many fishes that the boats almost sank under the weight of them.

Simon was powerfully moved. He saw at once that this was no ordinary visitor. He fell on his knees before Jesus and said, "I am no good. I keep sinning; I try and fail." And Jesus quietly said, "Fear not, Simon.

The time is coming when thou shalt catch men as thou hast now caught fish." He promised Simon that instead of being fickle and weak and impulsive he should become as solid as a rock, and he began at once to call him "Peter," which means "man of rock."

Then he turned to the group of four fishermen and asked them to follow him. They loved their lake, their boats and tackle as they loved their life. But they felt the power and grace of this wonderful person and without any delay they forsook their nets, their boats and their happy life on the borders of Gennesaret and went with Jesus.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAIDEN WHO CAME BACK TO LIFE

TALITHA lived many years ago in a famous town in Galilee, near the shores of the beautiful Lake of Gennesaret. Her father, who was an important man in the town, the ruler of the Synagogue, loved his little girl with all his heart. She was dearer to him than his own life was. Ever since she came to his home as a wee, tiny baby she had been a child of joy to him. Most Jewish fathers greatly preferred boys and in some homes in Galilee girls were not very welcome. But in the home of Jairus, Talitha's father, this little maiden was the most precious treasure of the entire family. Her name means in our lan-

guage, just "little girl," but it is a pretty name and almost any one would like to be called Talitha or "Alitha" for short.

One day into Talitha's home there came a very great sorrow. She was stricken down with an illness which no one seemed able to cure. She grew rapidly worse and worse. At first her father was not frightened. He thought Talitha's mother could soon make her well again. He had seen her ill before and she had quickly recovered. But this trouble seemed different. The doctors in Galilee were not much good, nevertheless the father ran up the street and got one to come and do his best to save this dear girl. Nothing which the doctor tried did any good. They soon knew that the case was a desperate one and that Talitha would die if some unusual help could not be found.

You may be sure that Jairus went away alone to tell God about his trouble and to ask Him for help. After he had prayed

with all his soul, he sat quietly with his face in his hands, thinking what he could do to help save his child. "She must not die," he kept saying, "I cannot let her go. I do not see how I could live without Talitha. Who in all the world is there who can save my dear child?"

Suddenly into his mind there flashed a happy thought. He remembered that a few days before he had heard a wonderful young man who was sitting in a boat, preaching to the people on the shore near by. He had never heard such words before from anybody. This young man had told much about the Father in heaven, how kind He was, how ready to hear and to help. He had said that God took notice of every sparrow that had a broken wing and that He cared much more for little children than He did for sparrows. Then this man, whose face was full of light and joy, had called God his Father and had talked about Him and to Him as though he

really were His son. Jairus said to himself, "I wish I could find that wonderful man. Perhaps *he* could cure my Talitha. I know he would try. He was so kind and so gentle." Then he remembered that he had seen him talking with John and Simon by the lake, and he started off at once to Simon's house to search for the person who seemed to know so much about God and about life, who perhaps could heal his daughter.

Alas, when he got to Simon's house he learned that Simon had gone out on the lake in his boat and that the remarkable visitor had gone with him. When Jairus reached the boathouse on the shore he heard from good old Zebedee, father of James and John, that his two sons, with Simon and Andrew and others had gone out in the large boat the evening before and that they had steered across the lake and had not come back yet. He told Jairus further that a great storm had swept down upon the lake a short time after

they had reached the middle of the lake. "Was the wonderful man from Nazareth with them?" anxiously asked the father of Talitha. "Yes, he was in the boat," answered the kind old man. "I saw him sitting in the stern of the boat, as it left the shore. He seemed tired and worn, for he had done many deeds of kindness in the town before he came to the lake, where he preached to the multitude, and where he taught many things to my sons and their friends."

Then Zebedee told Jairus that the name of this remarkable man was Jesus and that he had far greater power and wisdom than most people had yet suspected. This made it all the sadder for poor Jairus to have missed him. "Oh, why did he leave us? Why did he go away in the boat? Will he ever come back? What is happening to my precious child? Will she live until I can find him?"

Every hour that passed in the home of

Jairus saw Talitha grow more and more ill. All who were sitting by her bed felt sure that she would die before her father could return. Her eyes seemed looking about the room for him. She plainly missed him and seemed to be whispering "Abba," which was her word for daddy.

Meantime, Jesus was far away. He had gone, as we have seen, with James and John, Simon and Andrew, in the boat across the lake. A great storm had swept down upon them in the midst of the lake and almost overwhelmed the boat. Jesus was absolutely unafraid in the storm and had spoken to the waves as though he was the master of the sea, and, when his friends saw him and heard him, they too lost their fear and calmly rowed toward the farther shore, where they landed safely. Almost as soon as they had landed on the eastern shore of the lake, in a lonely and desolate spot, a man who was almost naked came running toward them.

His hair was long and tangled. His eyes looked wild and fierce. There was a piece of chain fastened to his ankle and there was an iron ring on his arm. He carried sharp stones in his hands. And every now and then he screamed with a terrible voice. Jesus' companions were more frightened now than they had been in the midst of the storm on the lake. One could see at once that the poor wild man was insane. It seemed to him as though evil spirits were living within him and making him do the mad things which he did. People had often tried to tame him with chains and fetters, but nobody had tried to see what love would do.

Jesus was not afraid at all. He looked with a calm, beautiful face straight at him and when he had come near to him he said a few quiet words to the poor, disordered man, which had a wonderful effect upon him. In a moment he changed his look, he dropped his stones, he bent forward to listen.

Then Jesus took his hand and said a few more words and almost at once he seemed changed into a new man. Some of the men brought their cast-off clothes from the boat and put them on him, and he sat down with the rest as happy as a child lost in a crowd would be if he had suddenly found his father.

After a little time spent in talk together Jesus said to the man, "You must go back to your home and tell your people how you have been made all well and happy, and show them how good the Lord has been to you." Then Jesus and his friends got into the boat once more and recrossed the lake to Capernaum. As they came toward the shore they saw a very large crowd waiting for them, and there was one man standing nearest to the shore whose face was full of sadness and who could hardly wait for the boat to land. As soon as Jesus stepped from the boat Jairus fell upon his knees before

him, stretched out his hands, and cried, "My little daughter, my precious Talitha, is dying. Oh, come, I pray thee, come, and touch her with thy hands and make her well. Oh, do not let her die."

Jesus turned at once to go with the distressed father. The crowd was pressing about him, for they had heard him speak from the boat and they hoped to hear him again. He could not, however, stop now to speak to them, for he was hastening, with all speed possible, to the home of Jairus. Suddenly a poor woman who for twelve long, weary years had been suffering with a trouble which no doctor could cure, came through the throng of people and touched the hem of his garment. She had said to herself, "Perhaps, if I can touch him, or even touch his robe, it will cure me of my disease. I will push through and try." Instantly the woman felt herself cured. It seemed as though a new power came from him into her and

made her well and strong. Jesus turned and saw the woman, and knew that power had gone from him to her to cure her. At first she was frightened when he looked at her, for she thought perhaps she had done wrong to touch him. But he smiled upon her and said, "Daughter, it is all right. Thy faith made thee well. Go thy way in peace and joy."

Just then messengers came running to tell Jairus that he had come too late. "It is all over," they said. "Thy daughter is lying all white and still. Nothing can be done for her now." Jesus turned to Jairus, whose face was all wet with tears, and said, "Fear not; keep on believing that she will live."

When they came to Jairus' house they found many people gathered. The members of the family and the relatives and friends were there. They were all weeping. It was a sad and pitiful scene. The poor father found it very hard now to go on believing

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that Talitha would live. But Jesus had told him so, and he believed Jesus. As they came into the house Jesus asked the weeping visitors if they would withdraw for a little time and let the house be quiet. When they had all gone into the yard and a stillness had come upon the house, Jesus took the father and mother of Talitha and his three friends, Simon and James and John, who had followed him, into the room where Talitha lay, her eyes closed, her hands crossed, looking as though she would never move again. Her mother wept as she once more saw the quiet form, but her father looked calmly at Jesus and believed. Simon and James and John wondered. Jesus went to the bed, leaned over it, and took one of the crossed hands in his, as he had taken the hand of the wild man by the shore of the lake. Then he said, "Talitha, arise." Her eyes opened, color came to her face, she moved, and then she got up, as though it were morning and

she had just awakened from a long night's sleep. To the mother it seemed impossible; to the three friends it seemed amazing; to the father it was what he had believed would happen; to Talitha it was a joy to feel again as she did before her illness came. You can imagine what she said to her mother and to her father and to Jesus, and you may imagine if you can what Talitha's father said to Jesus.

CHAPTER X

THE BOY WHO DID NOT BECOME A DISCIPLE

I AM going to tell you of a boy who when he grew up had the chance to follow Jesus, as James and John, Simon and Andrew did —to be his disciple, to go everywhere with him, to hear all his words of life, and to be his close and intimate friend. But he missed the chance, failed to see what it meant, and lived and died without ever knowing the joy and the glory of being a friend of Jesus.

This boy was born in one of the large towns of Galilee in a beautiful home in which there was almost everything a boy could desire to make him happy. His father was very rich and there were many

slaves and servants to take care of him and to do for him every least thing he thought of wanting. His name has got lost in the long years that have passed, but we will guess that it was Philip, which means "lover of horses," for we may be pretty sure that this boy had a Greek name. Jewish families who were rich and who lived in the towns of Galilee usually gave their boys Greek names, though they also often gave them another name along with it, and the other name of course was Hebrew.

Philip was a charming boy to see. He had a beautiful face. The dark tint of his skin exactly fitted his black hair and dark brown eyes. He was taller than most boys of his age, swift of foot, strong of arm, quick-moving and swift in his decisions. His clothes were of the finest cloth which came from Damascus, and he had the most attractive head turban his father could find for him, and bright-colored sandals, for Philip

never went barefooted as so many other boys in Galilee did. As soon as he was big enough for it, he had a little pony and learned to ride all over his father's estate. He had many other pets, for his father traveled widely and brought back many things for the boy he loved.

You will think, perhaps, that Philip is going to be spoiled, for most boys get spoiled when they can have anything they want. But Philip did not get spoiled. He had a very fine mother who decided when he was a baby that she would train him to be a true boy and a good man. She taught him herself. She trained him. She inspired him. She encouraged him. She believed in him, and when it was necessary she punished him, so that he might learn the difference between what was right and what was wrong. One thing which Philip's mother was continually doing was to tell him interesting stories about the great leaders and heroes of the

nation, especially about what they did when they were boys. Philip thrilled over these stories and he was fired with ambition to be a true leader himself when the time should come for it.

Philip's mother made a great point of teaching him about the religion of his fathers. The family kept all the feasts and celebrations. They read the stories which explained these great events. They went up to Jerusalem every year for the Passover, and this journey year by year made a deep impression on the quick, active boy's mind. He asked a thousand questions, and he knew as a boy more about his nation's history than most men did. The ten great commandments he learned by heart almost as soon as he could speak, and a little later he learned all of the 613 commandments in the Book of Moses.

It is a good deal easier to learn commandments by heart than it is to "keep them" in

your daily actions, but Philip resolved that he would not only *know* the commandments but that he would *do* what they said, and that he would not do what they forbade. This was much harder work than it was to learn to ride his pony, but he put it through and conquered. He would often come to his mother in the evening and say, "I think I won today, mother, but I came pretty near losing two or three times." It was always fine to see how they understood each other, what good friends they were, how much they helped each other and how they enjoyed being together.

As Philip grew up and became a young man everybody was attracted to him. He grew still more beautiful in form and face. He was very particular about his clothes and his manners. His father had died and he had inherited the great wealth of the family. While he was still quite young he was made a ruler of the Synagogue. He had to keep

order in the meetings. It was for him to decide who should read the lessons, and many times he read the lesson himself, with his fine, clear voice. It looked as though this young man had everything he could want. He was possessed of a beautiful face. He was absolutely well and had a splendid body. He was very rich. He had houses and lands, horses, and a multitude of servants. He was beloved by many and was liked by all. He was ruler of the Synagogue and had honor and dignity. What more could he want? Was he not at the top of his desires?

No, strangely enough, Philip was not as happy as you would expect him to be. He enjoyed the things he had and the honors that had come to him, but he was not satisfied with himself. He had come to feel that just keeping commandments did not make a man good. There was something more needed. Every time he drove into the town he saw crowds of poor people, many of them

thin and hungry. He saw others who were lame or blind or suffering with leprosy. He saw little children growing up without any care and becoming bad, because nobody showed them how to be good. He would come home to his splendid house and his sumptuous dinner, and he would say to himself, "How can I be a good man when I do nothing to make the world any better? I never do a thing to make these poor people happy, or these sick people well, or these street boys good." Whenever he thought about it, it always spoiled the joy in his own successes and he used to say to his mother, "Dear Mother, you have showed me how to keep commandments, but you have not yet showed me how to be a really good man, for you have not taught me to love and help the poor, miserable people I see every day. I never do anything for them. I just live for myself and enjoy my riches."

Little by little Philip began to hear stories

and rumors of what Jesus was doing in the towns of Galilee, especially in the towns about the lake. One day when he drove into the town from his estate, Philip saw a great throng gathered in a square of the town. In the midst of the throng there was a remarkable looking young man speaking to the people who were listening to him as though he were an angel from heaven. He held a little child on the crook of his arm as he talked to the people, and every now and then he looked down at the child and smiled. The mother of the child stood a little way off and watched the scene. In the throng there were people with all kinds of troubles and diseases, twisted bodies, deaf ears, blind eyes, paralyzed arms, worn sad faces, people with wretched, tattered clothes. And Jesus, for this was Jesus, began to cure them, to make them straight and well and strong. And he told them joyous, happy words about God and life and the Kingdom.

Out in the street in his gorgeous carriage, driven by his slaves, sat Philip in his perfect dress, with his perfect body and with all the signs of his wealth about him, and he looked and listened with amazement and wonder. Here was a new kind of teacher. He loved everybody and cared for them. He held ragged, dirty little children in his arms. He made folks well, and he showed them how to be happy, and there in the midst of all this poverty and sickness and want he, the teacher, looked radiant and full of peace. Wherever he moved among the people he spread joy and happiness. *He* had no sign of wealth. He had no carriage, no fine clothes, no slaves, and yet he had *everything.*

As soon as the crowd withdrew and left Jesus somewhat alone, Philip leaped from his carriage, where he had watched the remarkable scene, and he ran to Jesus and kneeled down on the ground by him and said, "Good Teacher, show me how to be

good, teach me how to live the true life which I want." Jesus said, "Do you know the commandments?" "Oh, yes," Philip said, "I have known them all my life and I have kept them ever since I was a little tiny boy. What is it that I lack? I know that I lack something. I am not perfect; I am not the good man I want to be." Then Jesus became very deeply interested in him. He looked at him tenderly and showed that he loved this fine young man, and wanted him to be one of his disciples. "One thing you lack," he said quietly to him. "You care too much for your money, your fine clothes, your lands and houses, all the things you have got. You live too much for yourself. You do not love these poor people enough. You are tied by your riches and you need to let your life go out to others. Go sell everything you have and come and follow me, and use all your wealth to make other people well and happy. Live with me. Be my

disciple and learn to love others better than you love yourself."

That was the chance that came to Philip. He knew that the words were true. He felt that his own life was a failure. He saw what a radiant person this leader and teacher and helper of men was. For a moment he almost said *"yes."* But there were all the fine things he would have to give up. He would lose all his servants and have to wait on himself. He would have to walk instead of ride, as he had always done. He would have to eat just plain bread instead of all the splendid food which now loaded his table every day. He would have to wear rough, ordinary clothes instead of these gorgeous ones he now had on. He would have to live among the poor, miserable people of the street instead of with the elegant people who were now his friends.

No, he couldn't do it. He wanted to go with Jesus. He wished he could be like him.

If he could only have Jesus and keep his wealth, too, he would gladly do *that.* But the old habits of his life were strong and they held him now like mighty cords when the most important moment of his life had come. He made the great refusal—he lost the chance to go on into the great life with Jesus.

CHAPTER XI

SIMON BECOMES PETER

ONE of the most beautiful spots in the world is the hilltop terrace on which the old city of Cæsarea Philippi was built. It is here that one of the branches of the river Jordan rises. It bursts forth out of the ground at a vast springhead and plunges on its course to form the famous river in a series of glorious waterfalls. The old city was over eleven hundred feet above the level of the sea, while a thousand feet still higher up, above the town, was a great fortress, now in ruins. Away to the northeast rose the greatest mountain in Syria, magnificent old Mount Hermon, almost eight thousand feet high,

covered much of the year with snow. In all directions from the terrace of Cæsarea Philippi there are mountains in view. There are great stretches of oak forest and down every valley and chasm runs a stream which is flowing on to help make the Jordan. The surrounding country is full of wild animals and game birds. Panthers and wolves, wild boars and gazelles abound in the woods and fields.

If you stood, my dear reader, on the limestone terrace where this source of the Jordan is born, and looked out on the extended view, I am sure you would agree with me that it is a place of surpassing beauty and grandeur. It was in the midst of this beauty here that the Greeks more than two thousand years ago, built a temple to their god Pan. He was supposed to be the god of all nature—of mountains, rivers, trees, fields, flowers, birds, beasts, light, darkness—everything. This then was a perfect place for

Pan to have a temple and some of the old Greek inscriptions, cut there so many years ago, are still to be seen and read on the rocks, after all the centuries of storm and change.

One day Jesus came here with his little group of friends, who were called disciples or learners. It must have been a wonderful journey from Lake Gennesaret. They would see the upper valley of the Jordan. They would stop at the Waters of Merom where the river widens out into a lake. They would pass through the rich and beautiful plain of Huleh, and then they would climb the wadies and hills leading up to the famous town named after Cæsar and Philip, where Pan once had his temple and where the great fortress guarded the country round about.

Jesus was on his way to Tyre and Sidon. I do not know why he was going there, but I am sure that he and his friends were

thrilled with the glory and beauty of this place which lay on their way, and we can easily guess that they all drank of the refreshing water that gushed out of the great rock spring. Some ancient story says that the woman who was healed by touching the hem of his robe lived here in this hilltop city. If she did live in Cæsarea Philippi of course Jesus went to visit in her home, and we can imagine the joy she had as she prepared a meal for her wonderful guest and his friends.

What we do know is that here, or near by in some quiet spot, Jesus had a remarkable talk with his group of twelve disciples. I expect they were sitting down on the grass after a meal together in the open country, with the great world spread around them. Jesus, after listening to the talk which his disciples were carrying on among themselves, turned to them and said, "Who do the people think I am? You say that you have

heard them talking about it; what do they say about me and what do they think my mission in the world is?"

At first they all hesitated to answer. Then one of them said that he had heard people say that perhaps Jesus was Elijah, who went away in a chariot of fire, come back to the world again. Another said, "I have overheard people in the crowds declare that thou art Jeremiah the prophet, returned after all these years to teach the people in our day." Still another one announced that some people believed Jesus to be John the baptizer whom Herod had killed, now raised to life again. Jesus said nothing as he listened to these strange accounts about himself. He seemed lost in deep thought. Some who had not spoken before said that they had often heard people ask one another who Jesus was. They said that those who talked about it almost always decided that he must be some great prophet who had come back to the

world again. They did not understand how anybody could do such wonderful things or say such beautiful words, if he were not one of the old prophets whom God had sent in ancient times.

All the time that the others had been talking Simon had been looking quietly at Jesus' face, thinking but saying nothing himself. You could see that a great idea was working in his mind. There was a new kind of glow on his face but he wasn't ready to speak yet. Generally he spoke the first of all, sometimes before he knew quite what to say. This time he waited. Jesus could easily see that something new was happening to Simon.

After a little time Jesus asked a new question. "What do you yourselves think and say that I am? You who have been with me?" This was the moment Simon was waiting for. All his pent-up feeling went into his sudden words, "I say that you are

that Messiah whom the world has so long been expecting." Everybody was surprised at Simon's words. The others had not thought of this. They thought, as the people did, that Jesus was a great prophet. Simon had flashed on ahead of them and said the great word, "Messiah." Everybody watched eagerly to see what Jesus would say to Simon's bold speech.

"Thou art Peter," is all that Jesus said at first. He had told Simon when they met by the boats that some day he should have his name changed, because his whole life should be changed, and then he should have a new name to fit his new character. "Now," he said, "thou art Peter—the rock man, solid and true." Then he asked Simon Peter if he knew what it meant to be a Messiah.

Peter thought it meant being a splendid king, having great possessions and banquets. He thought it meant going up to Jerusalem and driving the Romans out, and then mak-

ing Jerusalem the capital city of the world. He thought the Messiah would have power to do anything wonderful he might want to do. In fact, he supposed that the Messiah was the most glorious being in the universe and so He could have things exactly as He liked to have them, and He could make all his friends happy. Jesus was deeply moved as he listened to Peter. His face was marked with lines of pain, and Peter could see that Jesus held quite a different view. He did not speak at once, and they all waited quietly for him to answer. "No, Peter," he said, "the world needs another kind of Messiah, very different from the one the people imagine and that you imagine."

Then he told them, I think, about his baptism by the fords of Jordan and about the great temptations that followed when he first began to see what his mission in the world was to be. He spoke now very solemnly, and what he said showed that he had long

been thinking of what the world's true helper must be like.

"Peter," he said, "the person who comes to deliver the world from evil and pain and sin and suffering must be one who has suffered very much himself. It is not a new king but a new kind of friend that is needed, one who loves and understands everybody. If he is to reveal to men what God is like, and if he is to show them what is best in themselves, then he must be pure and gentle, tender and loving, kind and forgiving. He must forget about himself and care for others. He must be ready to bear other people's burdens. He must be kind to those who abuse him, and he must love those who are hard and cruel to him. The real Messiah, God's true Messiah, will be hated and scorned. He will be despised and rejected. He will be spit upon and treated as though He were a criminal. He may even be put to death, Peter, instead of being crowned."

"It cannot be, it must not be, it shall not be," said this bold, rock-like man.

"That is just the way to hinder me and to make me fail, Peter," said Jesus. "Now you are talking to me the way the tempting voice talked to me in the wilderness. You want me to be the wrong kind of Messiah and you would lead me to do my work in the wrong spirit and in the wrong way. You must learn to see my work as God sees it and as I see it, and you must not tempt me to use force where only love will work. Only those can enter the Kingdom of God, Peter, who are willing to suffer and to lose themselves for the sake of love. He that loses himself will find himself. If we are to bring the Kingdom we must be ready to walk the hard and painful road of the cross and not think about our own ease and comfort."

A hush came over them all. They looked at Jesus in silence and awe, and they won-

dered what he meant. It was entirely different from what they had always thought the Messiah would be.

A few days after this talk with Jesus among the hills of Cæsarea Philippi, a wonderful experience happened to Peter and to his two dear friends, James and John. They had climbed with Jesus some mountain that lay along the road of their travel, and there on the top they sat down to rest from their steep climb. The world was touched with beauty and glory. It seemed far away from cities and from the troubles of life, as though the world were perfect and as though joy was the natural thing. Suddenly the three men were surprised to see a new and wonderful light on the face of Jesus. It was not a light from the sunset. The light did not come from outside. It came from inside. They had been looking at the glory on the hills and on the distant water. Now they saw a greater glory on a face which they had

learned to love. It shone with a radiance they had never seen before on any face, and they seemed to hear Jesus talking with some one about his mission in the world and about the suffering that lay before him. They wished that they might stay forever there in the mountain top where there was no suffering and where they seemed to feel God and heaven almost as near to them as Jesus was. While this was occurring on the top of the mountain there was a father at the foot of the mountain who had brought his child for Jesus to cure. He had a terrible disease. He would fall upon the ground in a strange fit, with no power to stand, or to walk, or to talk. Sometimes he fell into the fire and sometimes into the water, and thus he had to be watched all the time to see that he should not go anywhere alone. Jesus' disciples were sitting at the foot of the mountain waiting for Jesus and his three friends to come back from their ascent of the mountain. The

agonized father brought his boy to them and cried, "Oh, do try to make my child well, like other boys." And they did try in every way they could think of. They did the things they had seen Jesus do. They said the words they had heard him speak. But it all did nothing for the boy. They could not cure him.

While they were trying in vain to heal him Jesus came walking down the path. The father saw him and ran and kneeled before Jesus. With upraised hands he cried, "Have mercy on my poor boy. Thy friends have tried to help him but they cannot do it." Jesus bent over and took the boy by his hand, as he lay upon the ground, and spoke a few quiet words to him and at once he was well like any healthy boy. The disciples when they saw it were amazed and said to him, "Why could not we do it?" "You must be sure of God," Jesus said, "or you cannot do things like this. It takes faith. You can do *anything* if you have faith."

CHAPTER XII

MARY OF MAGDALA

ON one of the most beautiful sites by the western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret stood the little town of Magdala. There is no town there now. The wars of many centuries have laid it low. Its houses are gone; its ruins are buried deep below the soil, and if you walked over the mounds and hillocks by the shore of the lake you would hardly believe that once there was a busy fishing village where you were standing.

But there it was and many things of joy and sorrow happened in this vanished town of Magdala. Little children played their games there nineteen hundred years ago.

They wondered what kept up the sky and how far they would need to go to reach the horizon where the sky and earth touch, and how the birds could float in the thin, invisible air, and many other whys, which you have also wondered about, my dear reader. Among all these little children who played and wondered there in Magdala by the shores of Gennesaret so long ago there was one special child whose story I am going to tell you.

Her name was Mary, a name mothers in Palestine loved to give their little girls. She was born about the same time that Jesus was born in the manger, and she was growing up at the same time that Peter and Andrew and John and James were forming their young lives in the lake town a little farther north. Like most girls born in Galilee Mary of Magdala was a beautiful child, even when she was very little. There was an extraordinary beauty in her eyes, and her hair was

so lovely that all the other girls of Magdala envied Mary. But notwithstanding her charm of face and features Mary was a very difficult child. She always had been difficult. Nobody quite knew what was the trouble with her, but it was clear that she was never like anybody else in the lake town. She usually did not do what she was told to do. She would often do the opposite, or she would run off and sit alone in silence and make no answer when she was called. She did not play happily with other children. She was selfish and stubborn and disagreeable. Sometimes it seemed as though she must be ill, but she did not complain of any illness, only she seemed queer and strange. Her mother almost worshiped her and would do anything she could to please Mary, but even *she* did not understand this difficult and unusual girl.

She often seemed much more like a boy than like a girl. She liked to do the things

boys did. She always wanted to learn to row boats and to fish. She would wander away by the shore of the lake and gaze out on the rippling water for hours at a time and wish she could be a fisherman and work in the boats and with the nets instead of having to do housework in the little stuffy house which she could not bear to be in.

But she was a girl and not a boy, and a fisherman's life was not for her. As she grew older she grew ever more beautiful, and though she did not often see her own face, since her home had no mirror in it, yet she knew that everybody thought her beautiful and she soon learned to care very much for fine clothes, especially for gay colors. When Mary made up her mind to have anything she wanted she usually got it, because her mother could not bear to disappoint her or to cross her will. In other words, she was a good deal "spoiled."

"Mother," she would say, "I must have a

new dress. My best one is worn and looks almost ragged. I cannot wear it any longer when I am going out where people will see it."

"But, my dear Mary," her mother would say, "you know that you have much nicer things than any of your brothers or sisters have, and your clothes are much newer than mine are. And then, too, you know that your dear father has a very hard time to get bread for us all and he has no money which can be spared to buy you new things this year."

"Well, I don't care," cried Mary, "I am going to have what I want. You ought not to let your daughter wear these old things any longer. It spoils all my good looks to have such ugly clothes."

And so she talked on until her mother gave in and all the family sacrificed and gave up something so that Mary could have her precious new clothes and could

impress her friends with her beauty and splendor.

You all know how disagreeable any one becomes who always has her own way. Nobody likes a selfish person, whether it is a boy or girl. Sooner or later there is sure to be trouble ahead for such people. Mary had fine clothes, lovely hair, and beautiful eyes, but she did not have a good spirit and she was not loveable. She had no friends. She was foolish and self-willed, and she was bound to suffer before she learned a better way of life. I shall not describe to you the trouble and suffering that came upon this girl of Magdala. But it is enough to know that she found herself at last in a cold, hard world where nobody loved her, for her mother had died, and where there seemed to be nobody to help her in her bitter misery. Whether she was ill or not when she was a little girl, she was certainly ill now, and lonely and despised. She had insisted on her

own way and this way had led to bitterness and pain and sorrow and a useless life. Sometimes it seemed to her as though something acted within her which she could not control, some force outside and beyond her own will that made her do things. She often felt a spirit of evil pushing her on, even when she wanted to do right; like a bad habit, only worse and more powerful. When she tried to conquer it and rise above it, it would not be conquered. It just held her like the grip of a great hand. It seemed to poor, broken-spirited Mary of Magdala that it would have been better if she had never been born. "Oh, me," she cried in her misery, "why could I not have died when I was a pure little girl playing by the lovely waters of the lake."

Just then something happened which made all the world different for her forever. She met Jesus. He passed through her village of Magdala and he found her when all her

hope was gone and all the joy of life seemed ended for her. She had never dreamed that there could be anybody like him. Since her mother's death nobody understood her, nobody had any patience with her. Everybody scorned her and turned away from her, and gave her up as hopeless.

Jesus was wholly and totally different. As soon as he saw Mary he knew that she was in trouble and needed help. He turned and looked at her with a face of kindness and tenderness such as she had never seen before. Then he spoke to her with a voice unlike that of any man she had ever heard. It was low but it was as clear as a silver bell. Every word was distinctly heard with her ears and reached far within her soul, and made faith and hope come to birth within her. He made her feel at once that he believed in her, that he knew all about her failures and mistakes, but that he was not thinking of these. He was thinking of the new Mary

that might come out of her poor, wasted, disappointed life, and he began to describe the future which he saw for her as soon as love and truth and goodness should flow from her heart. He called her from her old selfishness and love of things for herself, and he told her how to live for others, to forget herself and seek the joy of making others happy.

The change which came over Mary was wonderful. She had not lost all her former beauty; it was only marred by her selfish life and hidden. It came back greatly increased as her whole soul responded to the words of Jesus. Her eyes were now full of light such as had never shone in them before, and her face showed a loveliness no one had ever seen there until then. The old spirit of evil which had held her with a force she could not break now lost all its power over her, and she felt a new power spring up within her which made her eager to do sweet and

lovely things. How she wished she could tell her mother of the great change in her life and spirit, but that could not be! She could perhaps show Jesus sometime how her whole being rejoiced with thanksgiving for what he had done for her. One day a chance came for her to do it. Jesus was eating in the house of a prominent man who had invited him to dinner because he wanted to see what Jesus was like and why people followed him so. He didn't love or care for Jesus; he was only curious to see him and hear him. He gave him no water to wash his dusty feet. He did not offer to anoint him, as was the custom when a distinguished guest came. He showed no favor and no courtesy.

Suddenly the door opened and a woman came in and wept upon Jesus' feet and washed them, and then broke a precious vase made of alabaster and poured all the priceless ointment which it contained over his

feet, so that the marvelous odor of it filled the whole house and amazed all the guests. "She has done it," Jesus said, "because her love is very great, and her love is great because she has been forgiven much that was wrong in her life. Those who have been forgiven much love much."

It was this same Mary of Magdala who later was to stand by Jesus' cross as he was dying on it, and to her was given the privilege of seeing him again on the first day of the week after his crucifixion, and through all the years since she has been called Saint Mary Magdalene.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT THE MAN OF KERIOTH DREAMED ABOUT

WHO would you like to be if you had your choice and could be any person that ever lived? Almost everybody has some favorite hero or heroine—somebody who seems to have lived higher up than any one else, and no doubt you yourself often have thought that you would like to live a life like that of some person whose story fascinates you.

I am going to tell you now about a person who was never anybody's hero. Nobody ever wanted to be like him. Nobody was ever named after him. Nobody is ever fascinated by his story, and he is probably the one person in all history you would like

least to be. But, in spite of all that, he was an interesting boy and I think you would enjoy hearing about him.

He lived in Kerioth and his name was Judas. He was a fine-looking little fellow, very dark-skinned, with flashing dark eyes and with hair as black as coal. You would know at once, if you saw him, that he was born in an eastern country and that he lived in a land where the sun burned hot. And you will find if you read about it that Kerioth was far south in Palestine, as far south as the lower part of the famous Dead Sea, almost as far from Dan as Beersheba was. It was not a bit like living on the shores of Gennesaret where James and John, Simon and Andrew grew up. Here in Kerioth there was no chance to sail and fish. No cool breezes blew from the sea. There was an intense glare in the sky and the sun's heat flamed down on this dark-skinned little boy. He used to wonder how they could be true

as he heard the words of the beautiful psalm, "The sun shall not smite thee by day." "But it does, mother," he would say. "It always *smites* me, when I go out to walk."

He had no brothers or sisters. He was the only child of the family and he had learned to play almost entirely alone. This had made him rather a strange boy, unlike most boys in the country. He wandered along the banks of the brook that flowed by his home on its way to the salt waters of the Dead Sea. The banks were tangled with bushes and brambles and there were places almost like a jungle. Judas was never afraid of anything. He dared, even when quite small, to pick his way along through the thickets, which he liked because they kept the hot sun from smiting down on him. He knew every flower and every bird in the country around Kerioth. The trouble with him was that he did not know how to do things with other people. He was hot-

tempered. He did things in a sudden flash without stopping to think. He would dash away and do what came into his head, and then afterward he would wish he hadn't done it. But he never learned how to control himself, how to keep his balance, how to wait for better wisdom. He went off like a hair trigger as soon as ever an impulse popped into his head. He was eager, intensive, glowing and full of fiery heat like the eastern sun under which he lived in the little southern village of Kerioth.

There was, however, something attractive about this strange, odd boy. His eyes flashed with purpose. He acted as though he meant to do something unusual. His quick, rapid movements were always interesting, and he made everybody in gossipy old Kerioth wonder what he would do when he was grown up. It was plain enough that he was not going to sit around in his sleepy birthplace, or go on doing just what his ancestors before

him had done. He was sure to do something different. Would it be good or would it be bad? That was the question.

As Judas grew up he learned to read, and that was the most important thing that ever had happened to him. He loved reading more than he loved the brook, or the flowers or the birds or the shady jungles where he wandered alone. There was one kind of book which he loved more than anything else in the world. He had no storybooks. He had no pictures. He had no thrilling tales such as boys read now. The books he loved above all others were those called the "Books of Unveiling" or "Books of Revelation." They were books which told what was soon going to happen in the world. They told about angels and archangels. They had wonderful dreams and visions in them, and they told how at the right moment God would send Some One who would change all that was wrong and ugly and make a new

world with the bad and sinful and wicked all wiped out of existence, and with only the true and beautiful and good left in it. They had much to say in a mysterious way about the nations and the races that were enemies of "God's people" and who had come to conquer and to rule the holy city of Jerusalem. They described the overthrow and destruction of all such nations and the making of a perfect city upon the holy hill of Mount Zion, no walls about it and no enemies left to trouble or disturb it.

Every new book of this sort which he read, or heard read, made him more keen and eager to have the great event come. He would sit hours at a stretch and try to imagine what it would be like when "the great day" dawned. He smiled to think how weak and useless the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem would be when the great heavenly champion of the Lord suddenly came against them. My, wouldn't their banners and their

eagles drop and trail in the dust as soon as the King of the Lord's hosts appeared! How he would like to see it! How he would join in the shouts, "Hosanna," "Hallelujah," when the enemies of the Lord and of the holy land were being hurled down in ruinous defeat! All the intense and fiery nature of this earnest, impulsive boy was roused by the fervent hope which these strange books of that age inspired in him. His whole soul rose to the call of this vision. He thought of little else. He dreamed of little else.

When he was full grown, a young man with a soft, dark beard, Judas left his home in Kerioth and went out to find men in his nation who could tell him more about the great hope of the age, and could prepare him to help to make his glowing dream come true. At first he joined himself with John the Baptist and listened to his stern message, but one day Herod the King cruelly put John to death and then all Judas' hope that

he was the one who could deliver the land from its enemies fell to pieces. Then it was that he fixed all his eager hope on Jesus. Here, at last, he thought, must be the One the "Books of Unveiling" told about, the One who is to deliver Israel and make all things new and glorious.

And Jesus received this intense and fiery man very kindly, as he received everybody who came seeking. He loved the earnest spirit in him as he always loved earnestness in everybody, and he made Judas, the man of Kerioth, one of his disciples. He gave him every chance to learn about God and about life. Judas had never had a friend before. In Jesus he found a real friend. They walked and talked together. They ate and drank and slept together. Judas was trusted by Jesus to carry the money that belonged to the little band, and he was given charge of buying all their food and clothing. He was brought into the intimate inner circle

and might have become one of the truest and finest and noblest men that ever lived. The trouble was that he did not understand Jesus. He did not see what his words meant. He kept dreaming his old dream about overthrowing the Roman army, destroying those who ruled in the holy land, and setting Jerusalem free from her enemies. He always supposed that was what Jesus was going to do. He was following Jesus because he thought that suddenly some day—the great day—he would show the whole world that he was the One whom God had sent to be the hero and champion of the great deliverance. He had this idea so much in his mind that he read it into everything Jesus said and did, and so he missed the real meaning of all his beautiful teaching. And at length he grew very impatient because Jesus did not do what he expected him to do.

He used to go off alone, as he had done when a boy in Kerioth, and think and won-

der and dream. He wondered what Jesus would do if the Roman soldiers with their spears and swords took him and tried to put him to death. He felt sure that then Jesus would suddenly *act* as God's great champion and conqueror. He thought to himself, "I should just like to see something happen that would make Jesus do now what we all know he is going to do sometime. I believe, if they captured him and tried to put him to death, he would call down great legions of angels' armies and save himself and them—and then he would smite these foreign soldiers from Rome and dash them to pieces, and then he would go on and make the new world we all long for so earnestly!"

Once this idea got into his head he couldn't think of anything else. Whenever he heard Jesus talking he was always wondering to himself just what he would do, and how he would act if he were surrounded by Roman soldiers, and if they tried to arrest

him. Little by little he made up his mind to try it and see. He never dreamed but that Jesus would save himself. He only thought that this would be the way to force him to declare himself and to act as the hero of the great event. We shall see what came of it, and we shall discover what a sad mistake this man of Kerioth made when he tried his experiment.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT THE ROMAN CENTURIAN SAW

IT was the loveliest period of the year when the Jewish Passover was celebrated. Spring was in full splendor. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in such beauty as that which covered the fields and hills of Galilee. Just when this beauty was at its height nearly every family in the land sent one or more members up to Jerusalem to keep this great festival which stood in their minds for the birthday of their national life, and which always reminded them of the wonderful way God had led their fathers out of bondage in Egypt into the land of promise.

Jesus had long been planning to go up with his disciples to visit his friends in Jerusalem and to keep "the great feast," as it was often called. He was sorry to leave the beautiful country of Galilee where most of his work had been done, and where so many people had learned to love him, but he felt in his soul that he had some work to do which must be done in Jerusalem, the capital of the nation. His friends warned him that it was a dangerous journey, and he knew better than they did how dangerous it was, but he was never afraid when he was doing what he felt sure was right—and so straight on he went, unmoved, his face shining with light and joy.

Part of the way the journey lay along the Jordan valley, which at this time of year was crowded thick with beautiful sights and scenes, which, you may be sure, Jesus enjoyed to the full, though he was always ready to turn in an instant from his joy in birds

Jesus and the blind man

and flowers to help any one who needed his love and healing.

When he was going through the city of Jericho, which lay on his way, suddenly a beggar began to shout to him with a loud, weird cry, "Oh, Jesus, thou descendant of David, pity me, pity me, help me." The people tried to make the poor man keep quiet. They shouted at him to stop disturbing the travelers, but he only cried the louder and drowned their voices with his call to Jesus, "Oh, help me, help me." It was a blind man named Bartimæus. He had heard many things told of Jesus. He believed that Jesus could give him his sight, and he was determined now to seize this wonderful opportunity as Jesus was going by close to him. Suddenly Jesus stopped and said, "Call the blind man and tell him to come here." And the people said to him, "Cheer up, Bartimæus, Jesus is calling you to come." Instantly he sprang to his feet,

threw off his loose garment, and ran to Jesus and said, "Oh, dear master, if there is any way to do it, let me have my sight." Jesus said, "Thou shalt have it, for thy faith has made thee well," and at once the sight came to the man's eyes and he saw all the wonderful world around him, and he saw Jesus who had healed him. The first thing he did was to fall on his knees and thank God.

A little farther along the road Jesus saw a man sitting high up on a limb of a sycamore tree. He was a tiny, short man, and on account of the crowd that lined the street he couldn't see Jesus go by, so he had climbed up to get a good look at him as he passed, for he had heard wonderful stories about him. Jesus stopped and asked him to come down and told him he would like to go to his house and have dinner with him. This visit from Jesus changed the man's whole life, and when Jesus said good-bye to him to go on with his journey, this man had

left his old, crooked life behind and had started to live Jesus' way.

It was still some days before the great Passover, and Jesus spent his time talking to groups of people as he had done in Galilee, healing persons who had distressing diseases and doing beautiful deeds of love and kindness. One day he was in the temple, where he was watching the people as they worshiped and performed their various religious services. He saw a great many persons come to put their money into the public box for the poor and for the use of the temple service. Some of them who were rich made a great show and display of what they put in, and wanted everybody to see what a big piece of money they were giving. Pretty soon there came along a poor widow woman, in very poor, thin clothes. She had brought all the money she had in the world, which consisted of two tiny coins, called "mites," so small and light that they made no sound

when they were dropped in. She put them both into the box and went away. Jesus' heart was deeply touched. "That poor woman," he said, "has put in more than anybody else, because she has put in all she had."

Another day Jesus came to the temple when the people had crowded in there to buy and sell things for the Passover. It looked like a great cattle market. People in the streets, and even the children, had been waving palm branches as Jesus passed by, and they had been shouting with great joy, "Hosanna, hosanna!" As he came into the temple with his face full of pure and holy light, he looked at the buyers and sellers and said, "This is my Father's House, and it was meant to be a House of Prayer, but you are making it a shop of business." They were ashamed and afraid as they saw his face. They fell back before him. He drove out the sheep and oxen into the street. He had

all the tables of the money changers carried out, and also the cages of doves and pigeons. With his band of followers he cleaned and purified the whole temple and made it once more a sweet and beautiful place, as a place of worship ought to be. All this made a powerful impression on the people who saw it happen. Some were pleased and believed that Jesus was sent for a divine mission, and some were very angry and wanted him killed as a disturber.

On the evening of the famous Passover Jesus and his disciples met in a large upper room for their supper together. They all somehow felt that a great sorrow was coming to them, and that this might be their last supper together. Jesus broke the loaf of bread, as he usually did, and gave each one a piece. He told them that a great trouble was coming, and that he was afraid some of them would not be brave and true in the midst of the danger. Simon Peter spoke out

with much vigor and said, "No matter what the others do, you can count on me. I will never deny you or fail you."

After they had finished their supper and Jesus had said a few loving and tender words to each one of them, he went with James and John and Peter, who had been so often with him on important occasions, to the olive garden, called Gethsemane, to pray, and while he was praying there in the dark a band of soldiers came to the garden, led by Judas, the man of Kerioth. He had gone out from the supper and had told the rulers where they could find Jesus and arrest him. They had given Judas thirty pieces of silver for his help. He walked quietly up to Jesus and kissed him, for that was the sign by which they were to know which one of the men was Jesus. Then the soldiers seized him and led him away. He did nothing to save himself. He called down no legion of angels, as his disciples had hoped he would do, and as

In the olive garden

Judas thought he would do. He submissively allowed the soldiers to take him. They brought him first to the house of the High Priest, where his trial began at once in the night. Peter had hurried there to see what would happen, but he was plainly frightened. Whenever any one asked him if he knew Jesus he quickly said, "No, I do not know him." And once when Jesus, who was near enough to hear him say "no," turned and quietly looked with his calm, tender eyes, into Peter's face, Peter could not bear the look, but burst into tears and went out of the room. The soldiers did everything to Jesus they could think of that was mean and unkind. They struck him and mocked at him, and finally, to make fun of his claim to be a king, they took some thorn bushes, which were there to be used for the fire, and made a crown, which they pressed down upon his head.

Then they brought him, still in the night,

to Pilate's palace, to get Pilate to pass the Roman death sentence upon him. Pilate disliked very much to do it, because he knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong, but he was afraid he might lose his position as governor of Palestine if he didn't do what the High Priest and the people wanted done. He sent Jesus to Herod and tried to get Herod to make the decision, but Herod put a gorgeous robe on Jesus, as though he were a king, and sent him back to Pilate, who, after changing his mind back and forth, finally said to the Jewish rulers, "I do not see any reason to kill him, but you may crucify him if you want to," and the soldiers were told to lead him out through the gate of the city to the hill where he was to die on the cross.

Jesus had to carry his heavy cross on his back. There were two thieves who had their crosses strapped upon their backs, for they had been sent to die with him. As they went

forth in the morning light toward the place of crucifixion a great crowd gathered to see the spectacle. Many of them did not know how kind and tender Jesus was. They had not heard him speak. They had not seen him do his deeds of love. They had not learned to know his spirit. They had only heard the rumor that he was trying to make himself a king. And the others who did know and who had felt his love were swept along by the wild, furious crowd, who kept shouting, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Down between the throngs on each side of the narrow street Jesus went, following the centurion of the soldiers with more soldiers behind him. He was weak and tired and he was staggering under the heavy beams of the cross. Then he fell and could not carry the load any farther. The centurion looked around for some one who could carry the cross and he saw in the crowd a man named Simon of Cyrene, whose home was in the

country, and who was coming into the city for the day. Big, strong man as he was, he stepped into the street, lifted the beams on to his shoulders, and carried them all the way out to Calvary for Jesus. It changed his whole life, you may be sure, and it was the one thing in his life he remembered longest and loved most to tell to his two boys, Alexander and Rufus.

On the hill of Calvary, with the great crowd looking on and shouting, the soldiers did their cruel work. They nailed Jesus and the two thieves on the crosses and raised them up into the air to die. Standing near by with bowed heads and breaking hearts were Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary of Magdala, and John, the beloved disciple, who stayed watching until the end. The others were afraid and kept far away. Poor Judas suffered the worst agony of all, and Peter, who had denied him, came next in sorrow. Judas could not stand it, as he

thought of the awful mistake he had made. He went out in despair and hanged himself. Peter held on, though overcome with sorrow, and waited through the dreadful hours.

One of the two thieves saw at once that Jesus was different from anybody else he had ever seen before in the world. He knew that he himself deserved to suffer for the wrong he had done, but he felt that Jesus was pure and good and that he ought not to be treated in this cruel way. He felt Jesus' love and friendship even before they had spoken to each other. In the midst of the pain and agony he turned his eyes toward Jesus and said, "Wilt thou remember me when thou art with God in thy Kingdom?" and Jesus looked at him with tender love and said, "To-day we shall be together in Paradise."

It was hardest of all to hear the unkind cries of the people gathered about the crosses. They jeered at Jesus and had no sympathy in their hearts. They laughed at the words

written at the top of his cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." "Art thou a king, then?" they shouted. "If thou art a king, if thou art the Messiah, why, then, work a miracle and save thyself from the cross and come down."

Jesus still loved these hard-hearted people who misunderstood him, and he longed to help them, and just before the end, looking up to God, he said, "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." And then he said his last words, "Father, I trust my spirit to thee." The centurion of the soldiers was greatly moved by what he saw and heard, and at the last he turned to one of his men and said, "This man dying here was certainly a good man and an innocent man."

At the close of the day when all was over, a good man named Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and a member of the council of the nation, who deep down in his heart was a friend to Jesus and loved him, came and ten-

derly took the body of Jesus down from the cross and wrapped it in a linen cloth with many spices and perfumes, and laid it in a new tomb which had been hewn out in a great rock. Mary, his mother, and the other Mary who loved him, followed Joseph to the place and watched to see where he laid away the body of the one who was so dear to them—the one who had sowed more love and kindness than anybody who had ever lived in the world before.

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CHAPTER XV

BY GENNESARET ONCE MORE

THERE is something in us that does not die; something which cannot die. Pilate's soldiers could nail the body of Jesus to the cross and make *it* die, but one thing these soldiers could not do: they could not kill the spirit of Jesus. Nails and spears do not reach it; do not touch it. It was not killed when the body was killed; it was not shut up in the tomb where the body was laid away. God's world, my dear young friend, is very much bigger than this world which you see with your eyes and which you touch with your hands. The world we see is a kind of outside envelope around the true

world, the real world, which lasts on, even when the outside covering breaks up and falls to pieces. Some of Jesus' friends and disciples discovered this and were able to see him and talk with him after he was crucified.

Seven of the little band went back to their homes in Galilee after Jesus was taken from them in Jerusalem. These seven were Simon Peter, who had denied Jesus, and who was almost too sad and unhappy to live any longer; Thomas, who was somebody's twin brother and for that reason was called "Didymus," which means "a twin"; Nathanael, a very good man, whose home was in Cana of Galilee; James and John, whom Jesus sometimes called "the sons of thunder," and two other disciples whose names are not known. They had gone back home, but it did not seem like home any more. They were at home, but they were "homesick" because Jesus was gone, and he had come to be

all their life and joy. Nothing looked the same; nothing felt the same. There was the lake; there was the blue Syrian sky, but neither lake nor sky seemed as they had looked before the last journey to Jerusalem.

The men tried to talk about what had happened, but they couldn't talk about it. Peter couldn't think of anything but the way he had gone back on Jesus, his best friend, on that dreadful night in the High Priest's house, and the way Jesus looked at him. He would walk away by himself and sit down all alone by the shore of the lake and say, "Oh, I wish I could see him again, just once more. I want to tell him how sorry I am for what I did. I want to explain how I got frightened, and said it before I stopped to think what it meant. I did love him. I do love him. I will always love him. And I wish I could see him and tell him so." Then the great, strong, sun-browned man put his face

down in his hands and wept like a little child, "I wish I hadn't done it! I wish I hadn't done it!"

When he came back to the place where the other six men were sitting—all in silence—he had wiped the tears away from his face and he looked as though he had thought of something. One of the others looked up and said, "What is it, Peter?" They called him "Peter" now because Jesus had given him that name. "Yes, what is it, Peter?" the others said.

"I am going fishing," Peter said suddenly. "I can't stand living this way any longer. I am going back to the boat and the nets which we used to mend, and I am going to try living the old life which we used to live before *he* came and called us. It will be better than nothing to catch fish—I can't catch anything else now." At once, as soon as Peter said, "I am going fishing," the other men's faces changed. They seemed to wake

up and grow interested, and they all said, "We will go, too."

They found their old boat, put away carefully in Zebedee's boathouse. The oars were in it as they had left them. The fishing nets were not as strong as they were once, but they were waiting to be used. It took but a few minutes to run the boat to the water. The men eagerly leaped aboard and the last one in gave it a sharp push from the shore with his foot as he leaped from the shore. The four at the oars sent the boat rushing through the water, and it was plain to see that they had not forgotten how to row while they had been with Jesus. They sped along to the old fishing spot, and then they flung over their nets and swept the long curve of it round, as they used to do. As they pulled it in for the catch they grew eager and excited. The interest of their old occupation returned and for the moment they ceased to think of all that had happened to them.

But as they pulled the net all the way in they found it entirely empty, not a single fish was in it. Then they tried again a little more carefully and skilfully. It was still empty. Again and again they cast the net, slowly moving the boat from place to place. Each time they pulled it in they found nothing there but the meshes of the net through which the water ran out. The whole night long they fished—rowing about and casting, pulling in the net and finding it empty.

When the sun rose with its glorious red streamers in the eastern sky, above the hills beyond the lake, without saying anything, they rowed back toward the shore. They didn't go in at the landing by the town, where the people standing about would see their empty boat. They were rather ashamed of their failure and they aimed to land in a quiet, deserted place, farther up the shore, though they knew that they had no fish for

their breakfast. As they came nearer the shore, they saw some one walking there—some one alone on the shore. As they came within speaking distance the man on the shore called to them and said, "Boys, have you got any fish?" "No," they answered, "we have not caught anything." "Well," the man said, "try casting your net on the right side of your boat, exactly there where you are, and you will get plenty of them."

Instantly they threw out the net and started pulling it in. It was so full they could not lift it. You could see a host of fish leaping and jumping about in it as it swept through the water. Up to that moment they had not known who it was on the shore. But suddenly in a flash the beloved disciple looked up and said, "It is Jesus." Peter didn't wait a second. Fish or no fish, it did not matter to him. He plunged into the water and started swimming for the shore, for nobody who has once learned ever forgets how to

swim. And there, in very fact, he found Jesus, who told them to bring in the fish they had caught. There were two hundred and fifty-three of them and yet there was not a single hole broken in the net.

There on the shore by the fire that broiled the fish, they ate their breakfast together. Jesus broke the loaf of bread and gave each one of them a piece, exactly as he had always done at their meals when they lived together, and as he had done at their last supper before he was carried away from them. They did not ask him any questions; they waited for him to speak to them.

As soon as breakfast was finished Jesus turned to the one who had suffered most and who had been trying all through the breakfast to say, "Do you think, dear master, that you can ever forgive *me?*" He turned to Peter and with the most gentle voice and kindly manner said to him, using the old boyhood name, "Simon, do you love me still,

—do you love me more than anybody else does?"

Peter did not dare to look up and he answered very slowly and very humbly, as one who has done a great wrong thing answers, "Yes, indeed, I love you." "Then," said Jesus, "go out as a shepherd and feed my sheep in the world." In a few minutes Jesus looked at him again and said, "Simon, *do* you love me?" "You know," Peter said, "in very truth that I love you." "Well, then," said Jesus, "look after my little lambs who need some one's care." Then there was a hush, a more intense look full of affection and tenderness and complete forgiveness, and Jesus slowly said, "Simon, do you really, truly love *me?*" Peter looked up, all overcome with emotion, with his very soul in his words, and he said, "Dear Lord, you know everything, you know all about me better than I know my poor self—and you know that *I do love you.*" "Then," said Jesus, "it

will be your business to go about looking after those who need help as a shepherd looks after his sheep."

Peter knew at once that Jesus trusted him and still believed in him and was going to use him in the great work of the world, and he thrilled with joy. Once more he and his friends pulled the boat up on the shore and put it away in Zebedee's boathouse, with the oars and nets, and he and the others went forth into the world with heroic spirit to work for Jesus.

Many years afterward, in the greatest city in the world—at Rome—this Peter, who had been so weak and timid in the High Priest's house, met his own death at the hands of the Roman soldiers, and he met it as a splendid hero, and everybody knew then that at last Simon had become a *rock man,* as Jesus said he would, and was worthy to be called "Peter"—a rock.

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